

Ambiguous poll messages frustrate prospects for Labour

LABOUR leaders seeking guidance from recent polls about their election prospects are in for a frustrating time. The messages from the polls are ambiguous.

Labour's optimists can point to three favourable trends. First, during the past ten days Labour has regained a 3-4 percentage-point poll lead — enough to put Mr. Kinnock into No. 10, although without an overall majority.

The Conservative surge earlier this month looks increasingly like a temporary blip rather than the beginning of a sustained recovery. Conservative claims that they are doing best where it matters most were contradicted by this week's *Daily Express* poll of Conservative marginals which, in line with other national polls, put Labour 3 points ahead.

Second, the policy agenda favours Labour. On the issues that voters declare as most important — unemployment, the health service and education — Labour is the preferred party by comfortable margins. Welfare issues are Labour's traditional selling points, but its lead is much wider than in 1987 (see table). The issues on which it is vulnerable — defence, strikes, immigration — have dropped to the bottom of the agenda.

Third, Labour's image as a party of government has improved beyond recognition since 1987. Before the last election, voters saw the Alliance as an alternative opposition party. Only 28 per cent regarded Labour as the "only party that can turn out the government"; now 66 per cent do. In the run-up to the 1987 election, voters

Recent opinion poll results present Labour strategists with a confusing picture of how well the party is likely to perform at the next general election, Ivor Crewe writes

thought Labour unfit to govern: 73 per cent considered it "too split and divided" and 67 per cent as "too extreme". By last month these proportions had dropped to 47 and 35 per cent respectively.

Optimists can even shrug off the leadership problem. Mr. Kinnock's personal ratings might be low, but they are hardly disastrous, being no worse than Edward Heath's before he won the 1970 election and only a little below Margaret Thatcher's before she won in 1979.

Pessimists point out that most of the psephological

good news is deceptive. For technical reasons the polls are probably exaggerating Labour's support by 1-2 percentage points. They include the million-odd poll tax absentees from the register who are predominantly Labour and cannot vote, but they do not sample the 100,000 or so expatriates living abroad who are overwhelmingly Conservative and can. They take no account of the lower turnout rates among such Labour-voting groups as new electors, the urban poor and the Afro-Caribbeans. History

suggests that the government will recover ground. Under every Conservative administration, voters have swung back to the government in the eight months before an election.

The average recovery swing — 4 percentage points — would easily wipe out Labour's current slender lead. The recent ICM/*Guardian* poll suggests that, unlike last year, Labour's supporters are less strongly committed than the Conservatives.

Labour's popularity lead on welfare issues might be worth less than it appears. In the key area of the general economy every poll shows that despite the recession the Conservatives are trusted more, albeit by moderate margins. In autumn 1986 more voters thought Labour policies were "clear" (45 per

cent) rather than "vague" (43 per cent). By last month that balance had reversed to 36 per cent and 52 per cent.

There is no sure way of choosing between the contradictory poll signals. The public backs the pessimists: 48 per cent expect the Conservatives to win, 36 per cent Labour. Before the October 1974 election (the last one Labour won) and the 1964 election (when a similar Conservative majority to today's was overturned) a substantial majority expected Labour to win. Perhaps they know something the analysts do not.

Ivor Crewe is professor of government at Essex University

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Labour lead over Conservatives (%)				
	Apr 87	Jun 91	Improvement	
Which party do you think has the best policies to deal with:				
The National Health Service?	22	40	+18	
Unemployment?	10	37	+27	
Education and schools?	4	24	+20	
Inflation and prices?	-34	-7	+27	
Britain's defence?	-28	-34	-6	
Strikes and industrial disputes?	-20	-11	+9	
Law and order?	-26	-12	+14	
Source: Gallup				
Labour is the only party that can turn out the present government				
Agree	28	66	+38	
Disagree	66	28	-38	
Labour has become too extreme				
Agree	57	35	-22	
Disagree	24	55	+31	
Labour is too split and divided				
Agree	78	47	-31	
Disagree	20	43	+23	
The economy would be in a worse state under Labour				
Agree	55	44	-11	
Disagree	32	42	+10	
Source: Gallup				

Buoyant Kinnock denies ditching policies for power

By NICHOLAS WOOD AND PHILIP WEBSTER

A BUOYANT Neil Kinnock yesterday rejected Conservative taunts that he has ditched his principles to gain power and insisted on the eve of the last Labour conference before the election that his party was on course to victory. As 8,000 delegates, observers and journalists began descending on Brighton, the Labour leader said that he still regarded himself as a socialist. It was ludicrous to associate Labour's values and beliefs with the system breaking down in Eastern Europe. "If Eastern Europe is all that socialism has to offer, then the Latin American corrupt republics are all that capital-

ism has to offer," Mr. Kinnock said in an interview with *The House Magazine*, Parliament's weekly journal.

Labour has emerged from the political whirlpool of the last month with a three-point lead over the Tories, according to the latest opinion poll, which appears to have snuffed out any lingering chance of an election in November.

Mr. Kinnock said he wanted the conference to give out a message that Labour was ready for government and had earned the opportunity by responding to popular concerns with a programme that would make Britain a better place to live. Chris Patten, the

Conservative party chairman, returned to this theme last night, saying that over the past few months Mr. Kinnock had "shown that he is prepared to ditch any principle, sacrifice any colleague and reinterpret any piece of Labour history in the pursuit of power".

Cecil Parkinson, a former Conservative party chairman, urged the prime minister to use his speech at the Tory conference in Blackpool in two weeks to end the uncertainty and rule out general elections in November.

Mr. Kinnock said he equated socialism with freedom of the individual. But that could not be achieved without decent housing, work, a reasonable income and decent training and education. Socialism meant organising the community to provide for the individual.

"I have no worries about using the word socialist to describe myself," he said.

Labour leaders are convinced that proposals to reform the way MPs are selected will be approved by the conference tomorrow, (Philip Bassett writes).

The issue of the reelection of MPs is likely to be the only area of serious contention at the conference — though the issue of Militant will be heatedly fought on the conference fringes — and Labour leaders believe that if they can secure support for the changes they will greatly reduce the Conservatives' chances of using the conference to attack Labour.

Diary, page 12

Labour would give men pension at 60

By SHEILA GUNN, POLITICAL CORRESPONDENT

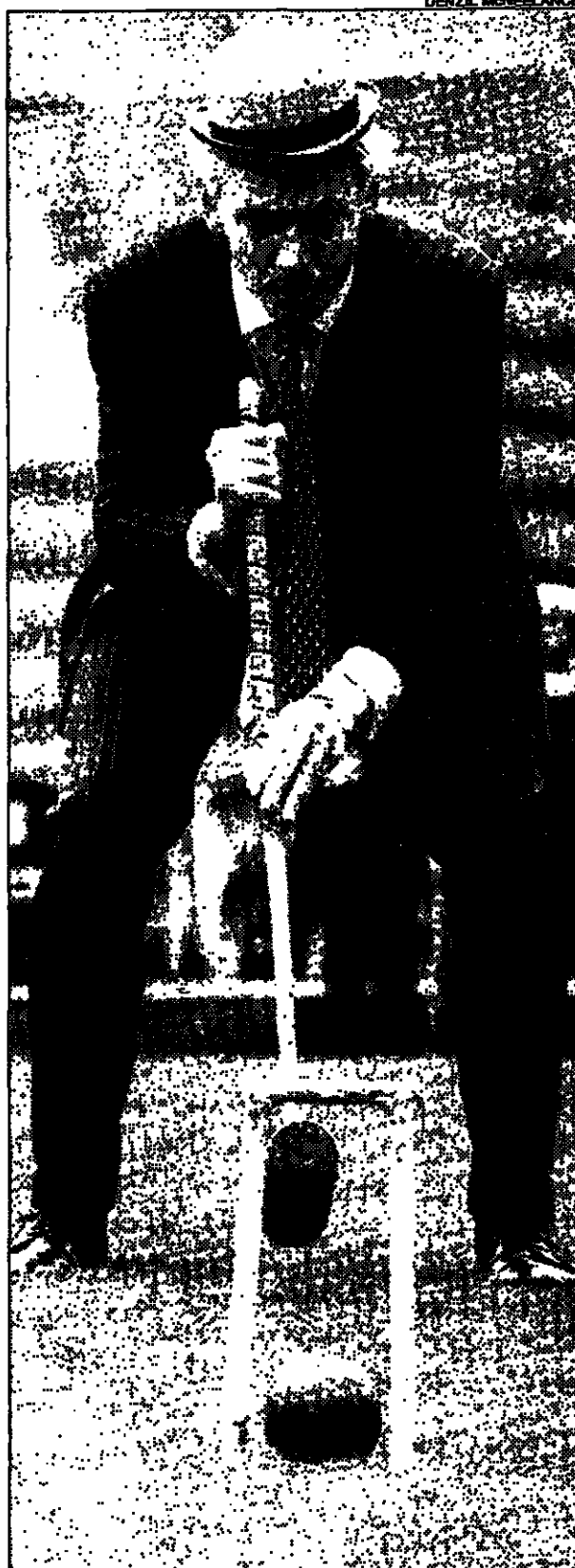
MEN would have the right to draw the full state pension at 60 under Labour's *Charter for Pensioners* published yesterday.

Michael Meacher, the shadow social security secretary, committed a Labour government to phasing in equal pension rights for men and women at 60 together with a new national pensions plan to replace Serps (state earnings related pension scheme) and higher pensions for the over-75s. He accused the Conservatives of holding a hidden agenda for a fourth term which would set the retirement age at 63 or 65 for both

sexes and means test the state pension.

Mr. Meacher told a Westminster press conference he expected progress towards lowering the retirement age for men from 65 to 60 in a first Labour government. Certain conditions might be applied, he added, such as requiring people to work a set number of years or staging retirement according to a person's health.

Last night, Tony Newton, the social security secretary, accused Mr. Meacher of scaremongering and insisted that the Tories stood 100 per cent behind the retirement pension.



Looking the part: James Hogarth playing croquet with other City workers in London yesterday to raise funds for an alcohol, drug and mental health help group

Immigration case suspects to be held in hospitals

By PETER VICTOR

SUSPECTED illegal immigrants requiring medical treatment will be confined to hospital in future, the Home Office announced yesterday. It has launched an enquiry into how three immigrants absconded from hospitals where they were being treated for typhoid.

The move, ordered by Colin Minchip, director of enforcement at the Home Office immigration service, was announced after it was revealed that three men seeking political asylum absconded from medical care earlier this month. Immigrants needing serious medical attention will now be treated at Bellingham prison hospital in Woolwich, south-east London.

All three men arrived in Britain from Bangladesh. They had been held at the immigration detention centre in Harmondsworth, south-west London, when they took ill. Kamal Hussain, aged 25, absconded on September 10 after he was transferred to Hillingdon hospital from Northwick Park hospital, the main infectious diseases unit for the region. "Although he was being treated for typhoid, he was being tested for malaria when he disappeared."

Alaud Ali, aged 30, was taken to Northwick Park hospital on September 10 and was treated for five days. He absconded two days later and is suffering from paratyphoid. Saibur Rahman was trans-

ferred to the hospital on the same day that Mr. Ali escaped. After two days of treatment he, too, ran away.

The Home Office yesterday confirmed the two men had typhoid. "We're concerned to ensure the risks to the public are minimised," a spokesman said.

Management at the hospital which treated two of the men criticised the immigration service for failing to prevent the escape. Vera Burns, from Northwick Park hospital, said the pair had been left unguarded on the isolation ward. "The responsibility for this lies with the referring authority, in this case the immigration service," she said.

The Home Office said that it had no powers to detain the men while they were in hospital. "The normal procedure is to release them temporarily, as though they were on bail," it said.

Typhoid infects the intestine and spread through food and drink infected by the organism. It causes bowel problems, fever and headaches. Severe strains can be fatal in 10 per cent of cases. It is caught through shared eating or toilet facilities or from body fluids, and it has initial symptoms similar to influenza.

Environmental health officers believe it unlikely a person with typhoid could transmit the disease unless he was unhygienic.

Fuller, legal eagle of poetry, is dead

By ROSE YOUNG

ROY FULLER, the poet, novelist and autobiographer who died yesterday aged 79, will be remembered as the man of letters who was 50 years with the Woolwich.

Just as Kenneth Grahame is forever linked with the Bank of England, Trollope with the Post Office, and Philip Larkin with Hull library, Roy Fuller's distinctive claim in the halls of literary fame is that he managed to double a successful literary career with his duties as a solicitor for the Woolwich Equitable Building Society, to whose board he was eventually promoted.

He did not just write verse. He also turned in a monthly 1,500 words of "legal notes" for the Building Societies Gazette. Both sides of his career were reflected in the books he published in 1949. One was *Epitaphs and Occasions*, a new book of poems. The other was *Questions and Answers in Building Society Law and Practice*.

He was already vice-president of the Building Societies' Association and chairman of their legal group when in 1968 he was elected professor of

poetry at Oxford and in 1970 was awarded the Queen's Gold Medal for Poetry.

As professor of poetry he broke with tradition by refusing to deliver the Creweian oration in Latin. In the manner of a very conscientious, hard-working professional he succeeded in making the oration sound like an end-of-term report with punctilious footnotes such as: "We remember here that the Duke of Windsor was a Magdalen man."

In middle life Fuller, with characteristic self-defensive irony, wrote his own obituary in verse.

Quite often he was heard to babble "Poets should be intelligible" or "What determines human fate is the class structure of the state".

Or "Freud and Marx and Dickens found — And so do I — souls not profound."

He leaves one question unanswered: why did the Woolwich choose to advertise itself with that smiling girl?

Obituary, page 14

Scrabble players take on the world

Forty-eight walking lexicons from 20 countries assembled in London yesterday for the first world Scrabble championships (Robin Young writes).

The definitive play on words is being staged at the New Connaught Rooms in Great Court Street, Holborn, over four days. The competition is a round robin and knockout basis similar to that used for World Cup football.

The finals, between the two top players on Monday, the last day, are expected to be relayed live by closed circuit television with a goggle-eyed and breathless commentary supplied by the television personality and Scrabble enthusiast, Gyles Brandreth.

Britain's team of eight includes the reigning UK national Scrabble champion, Phil Appleby from Leamington Spa, Warwickshire.

Hope for boxer

Doctors treating the boxer Michael Watson said last night they believed there were some signs of improvement. Watson, aged 26, is still in a critical condition in St Bartholomew's hospital, London, with a brain injury after his defeat last Saturday by Chris Eubank. However, doctors said that if he continued to improve in the next 24 hours, he might be gradually taken off anaesthetics.

Bell funeral

Penny Bell, the businesswoman found murdered in a west London car park on June 6, was buried yesterday after a funeral service near her home in Denham, Buckinghamshire. Her husband, Alistair, and her two children, Matthew, aged 11, and Lauren, aged nine, led the procession of more than 50 mourners, including detectives hunting her killer, to the graveside at St Mary's Parish Church.

£1.3m auction

An 89-lot collection of extravagantly ornate belle époque furniture weighing three tons and shipped specially by Sotheby's from New York to sell in London made £1.3m million in Bond Street yesterday. Sotheby's had hoped the collection would entice European and Middle Eastern buyers and had estimated it could make between £3 million and £4 million.

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The wicked lusts of John Knox

By KERRY GILL

JOHN Knox, the puritanical theologian and founder of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, whose gloomy shadow still falls over much of the Scottish psyche and temperament, was a ladies' man who formed an unusual relationship with his mother-in-law. It has emerged more than 400 years after his death.

A revisionist view of the ranting preacher, who berated the ungodly with cries of prophetic doom, is to be published next month by the Rev Stewart Lamont, the writer, broadcaster and journalist. Mr. Lamont has overturned the image of Knox as a tyrannical misogynist and has produced evidence that he had a string of female devotees and may even have carried on an adulterous affair with Elizabeth Bowes, Sir Roger Aske's daughter, who married Richard Bowes, captain of Norham Castle near Berwick on Tweed.

Mrs Bowes gave her husband no fewer than 15 children. She first heard Knox preach at Berwick accompanied by her fifth daughter, Marjory. The women, according to Mr. Lamont, fell under his spell. Although by then aged 45, Mrs Bowes was still sexually attractive in spite of having had 15 confinements. A curious ménage à trois

developed that culminated later in Knox marrying Marjory. Knox's many detractors have claimed the marriage was a front for his dalliance with Mrs Bowes, although the couple had several children.

Knox and Mrs Bowes exchanged letters for more than ten years. In one letter it is plain that he was sexually interested by Mrs Bowes, although it is unclear whether physical relations took place. He wrote: "In body you think I am no adulterer; let so be, but the heart is infected with foul lusts and will albeit I lament never same kill. Externally I commit no adultery but my wicked heart lusts itself and cannot be restrained from vain imaginings."

Knox, clearly fond of both women, later wrote to Mrs Bowes before his betrothal to Marjory: "Call to your mind what I did standing at the cupboard in Alnwick; in very deed I thought that no creature had been tempted as I was." But Mr. Lamont argues that if physical intimacy had taken place the marriage to Marjory could not have survived. He says that Knox was a caring man who remained loyal to his circle of women.

The Swordbearer, John Knox and the European Reformation (Hodder and Stoughton, £7.99)

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حکومت اسلامی

Charter will allow school inspections by private firms

By DAVID TYTLER, EDUCATION EDITOR

FREELANCE school inspectors will have to be approved by the government's own inspectors under the Parent's Charter announced by Kenneth Clarke, the education secretary, yesterday.

Private companies would compete with local authority inspectors for approval to conduct 6,000 school inspections a year. Inspection teams would include at least one person not working in education and would be expected to seek parents' views in preparing their report.

School governors would be provided with £70 million of the £135 million given to local education authorities for their inspection and advice services to appoint an inspection team. Reports would be provided every four years and governors would have to give parents a summary and explain the action they were taking in the light of any recommendations.

Mr Clarke said the cost of each inspection would range from about £6,000 for a small rural primary school to £30,000-plus for a large comprehensive. He rejected Labour claims that he was reducing the government inspectors' power by cutting the number of inspectors from 480 to 175 and introducing non-educationists. The government will keep a register of those allowed to lead trained inspection teams and will set standards of inspection. Those on the register will themselves be inspected and will be removed if they fail to meet agreed standards.

Labour claims that poor schools could enter into an agreement with privatised inspectors to provide a glowing report were dismissed by Mr Clarke. "Most governors are not going to seek out

inspectors to give them a party ride. It is disparaging of governors, which include many parents," he said.

Mr Clarke said the charter would guarantee parents an annual written report on their children, performance tables providing comprehensive information on all schools in the area and an annual report from the governors listing examination and national curriculum test results, truancy rates, how many secondary school pupils go on to university and college or into employment, the school budget and procedures for election of parent governors.

"For too long education has not been open enough to the ordinary person. The operation of schools has been a closed shop that can only be entered by those already inside. Education has been a mystery to the vast majority of people."

"Lack of accountability and lack of information has left parents ill equipped to make real, informed choices about their children's education. I intend to take the mystery out of education. It already happens in independent schools but we want the ordinary parent to have the same feeling that they have the same choice in the state system and the same accountability that previously could only be bought."

Independent schools will continue to make their own arrangements for school inspections, but they will be expected to follow the charter in all other respects.

Jack Straw, Labour's education spokesman, said: "Nobody will understand how cutting 300 of the 500-strong inspectorate is going to raise standards." The government's proposals, he said, were not so much a parent's charter as a "poor schools' charter" by which failing schools could be locked in to a cycle of decline.

Matthew Taylor, the Liberal Democrat education spokesman, said the charter was "pre-election gimmickry" and that parents were fed up with charters filled with empty promises. "Parents want good quality, well-resourced school buildings for their children — the Parent's Charter doesn't promise this," he said.

Doug McAvoy, general secretary of the National Union of Teachers, said the charter was a smokescreen. "While offers of more and more information flow from ministers, class sizes, the real key to improving children's education, are rising."

Peter Smith, general secretary of the Assistant Masters and Mistresses Association, said: "Pandering to parents for votes is a disservice to parents and children."



Multiple collision: the 38-tonne lorry after it slid from the M25's clockwise lanes and smashed into oncoming traffic in the rush hour

Five killed in six-vehicle crash on M-way

By BILL FROST

FIVE people were killed and six were injured after a multiple collision in rain involving an articulated lorry on the M25 yesterday near Brentwood, Essex.

A 38-tonne lorry, which had been travelling on the clockwise carriageway, crashed through the central reservation into oncoming traffic using the anti-clockwise lanes

just before 7am. Police said six vehicles were involved in the collision: the lorry, a pickup truck, a Ford Transit van and three cars. Three of the dead were in the truck, the other two in a Ford Scorpio.

Last night police said the dead included a father and son travelling with a friend in the pickup, and two brothers in the Scorpio. None was named.

Roger Paramor, the Essex chief fire officer, criticised

motorists for driving too fast. "I just wish we could put people who drive too fast into the cab of a fire engine going to an accident like this and let them witness the sort of things we have to deal with," he said.

The driver of the lorry, who suffered serious injuries, was stable in Oldchurch hospital, Romford, last night. Another person with serious injuries was taken to Harold Wood hospital. Three adults and a

child, who suffered minor injuries, were also admitted to Harold Wood. Eight-mile jams formed as police closed the motorway.

In London, two people died in separate accidents on Thursday night which police said may have been caused by treacherous driving conditions. The victims were both front-seat passengers. Scotland Yard said that rain and a build-up of oil and rubber had

made conditions particularly dangerous.

John Prescott, the shadow transport secretary, last night called for further restrictions on lorry drivers' hours in the wake of the M25 collision. In a letter to Malcolm Rifkind, the transport secretary, Mr Prescott said: "It is imperative that a study conference is called so that experts can begin to tackle the terrible problems of the M25."

Lockerbie residents can sue

By KERRY GILL

PAN AM failed yesterday to stop 385 Lockerbie residents from suing the airline in American courts over claims of distress after 270 people were killed when terrorists blew up flight 103 over the town almost three years ago.

Lord Kirkwood, sitting at the Court of Session, Scotland's supreme civil court, rejected the move by Pan Am, the operators of the airliner, to obtain an interim interdict that would halt the action. The residents suing the airline were all in the town at the time of the bombing. All have claimed that they suffered either injury, loss or damage and that they suffered emotional distress.

The judge's decision means

that the residents are now free to mount their action in America, which could result in their achieving higher levels of compensation than in Scotland.

However, Pan Am's lawyers argued yesterday that this might not necessarily be the case. Michael Jones, QC, for Pan Am, said that, even if a successful action was taken in America, Scottish law would be applied when deciding liability and damages.

All the 385 named residents, as well as up to 30 medical advisers and expert witnesses, would be forced to travel to America to give evidence. Mr Jones said Pan Am believed that its legal costs in a US hearing would be about \$7 million compared

with an estimated total of \$300,000 in Scotland.

Proceedings in Scotland would be much shorter than in America, where they could last two or three years. Mr Jones said that Scotland was the natural forum for the proceedings. "Justice can be obtained in Scotland at substantially less inconvenience than in the United States," he said.

Lyall Mudie, one of the lawyers representing the residents, said many felt that it was outrageous for Pan Am to have sought an interdict without informing them.

The residents are expected to begin the legal process in America on October 8.

Cathedral village sets up £500,000 appeal

By RONALD FAUX

CARTMEL in Cumbria is a village of 600 people with a cathedral to support. Yesterday it launched a trust fund to raise £500,000 for the 12th-century priory church, known as the cathedral of the Lakes, one of the few monasteries to escape destruction during the Reformation.

The Rev Christopher Atkinson, vicar of Cartmel, said that the village attracted 100,000 visitors a year. It is especially popular with retired clergy, who settle into the permanent retreat of the village.

However, visitors gave an average of only 15p each to help run the priory, Mr Atkin-

son said. "It is a wonderful building which still dominates the village in the way the old monasteries did," he said. However, it put heavy demands on the local community.

He said the object of the trust would be to maintain the teaching function of the church, to encourage and present music and to link the Anglican religious communities in Britain to perpetuate its monastic foundation.

"We do not want to become more commercial, because people come here for peace and to pray," he said.

Leading article, page 13

Scrabble players take on the world

Forty-eight walking here from 20 countries to play the first world Scrabble championships (Robin Yeates)

The definitive play words is being staged at New Connaught Rooms, Great Queen Street, half over four days. The petition is organised by a group of Scrabble players, similar to that used in World Cup football.

The finals, between the top players on Monday last night, are expected to be relayed live by closed-circuit television with a public and free-of-charge commentary supplied by the television personality and Scrabble enthusiast, Giles Brindley.

Britain's team of eight, including the reigning US champion, Larry Green, will play against the team from the USA, which includes the world champion, Raymond Munn.

Hope for box

Doctors treating the 18-year-old boxer, who was hit by a car in a collision with a lorry, said he was in a critical condition. The boxer, who was hit in the head, is being treated in a hospital in London. Doctors are hopeful that he will survive the injuries.

Bell funeral

Funeral service for the late Mrs. Bell, who died of cancer, will be held at St. Mary's Church, London. The service will be held at 11am on Monday.

£1.3m auction

Auction of the contents of the late Mrs. Bell's home, including furniture, paintings, and other items, will be held at Sotheby's, London. The auction will start at 10am on Monday.

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Maclean fans misled

BOOK buyers were misled over the authorship of two thrillers plotted by Alistair Maclean but written by another writer after his death, a court ruled yesterday. The publishers HarperCollins were fined £6,250 with £4,151 costs for five offences under the Trade Description Act.

Magistrates in Stratford-upon-Avon took four hours to decide that the covers of the books *Death Train* and *Night Watch* did not make clear who had written them. Warwickshire trading standards officers claimed the publishers breached standards by giving

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Jaguar adapts pilots' night sights for safer driving

FROM KEVIN EASON IN TURIN

NIGHT-vision sights used by Tornado fighter pilots to bomb targets in the dark during the Gulf War are being adapted by Jaguar car engineers to make driving safer.

The remarkable devices will allow drivers to see clearly in thick fog or find their way along unlit streets using a thermal-imaging camera to seek out the heat outlines of pedestrians and other vehicles. The sophisticated night sights were among the most successful uses of technology in the Gulf conflict.

Jaguar engineers yesterday demonstrated that the system developed at a cost of billions of pounds for the defence industry would have a successful peacetime application by helping to save lives on Britain's roads.

All objects emit some degree of heat, which the on-board camera picks up and converts into a black and white picture. Jaguar is leading a European group developing systems to project the thermal image on to the windscreen so that the driver can see the road ahead clearly, even picking out pedestrians 400 yards away on the darkest streets.

Jaguar's night sight is part of wide-ranging research by a consortium of European car and component makers combined in a project called

Prometheus. The British team includes Rolls-Royce, Lucas, Pilkington and Jaguar, who have joined forces with continental companies such as Mercedes-Benz, Saab and BMW.

The consortium said yesterday that accident rates throughout the EC could be cut by 30 per cent and traffic congestion by 20 per cent if the technology they were developing was adopted quickly. They emphasised that their hi-tech devices were not the stuff of a Dan Dare adventure but would be available within three years.

The project is the biggest example of industrial co-operation across national boundaries, but Prometheus executives admitted it was inspired by the need to combat infiltration of Japanese electronics.

Their goal is to make an "intelligent car" packed with electronic systems capable of interacting with the driver, other vehicles and an information network built into the road system. They also want pilot studies in 40 European cities, including London, Birmingham, Cambridge and Southampton, in which to study automatic traffic systems capable of controlling the rate at which vehicles enter the city, thus avoiding congestion.

The most exciting dev-

elopment however will be seen inside the car, which will have computers to help the driver to avoid errors that cause up to 70 per cent of all road crashes.

There could be some motorists whose ability to drive will be questioned by the car. Ford engineers at Dunton, Essex, say they will have a computer capable of telling a motorist when he or she is too tired or too drunk to drive. The machine measures the rate of eye blinking and the car's movements to establish whether anything is wrong and will tell the driver to pull over and rest.

That equipment will be on trial next year, among a variety of electronic equipment to be fitted to the dashboard of cars by the end of the decade.

However, engineers are worried that array of on-board guidance and warning systems will only serve to baffle motorists, many of whom are incapable of working a video recorder.

Jim Randle, Jaguar's director of vehicle and concepts engineering, said: "We can produce the technology but the biggest part of our research is to discover whether it helps the driver. That will take some time but we are confident we can make roads safer and less congested by using the results of our research."

Doubts in Brussels cloud approval for City airport

By CHRISTOPHER WARMAN AND MICHAEL DYNES

THE regeneration of London Docklands and the east London corridor received fresh impetus yesterday when Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary, announced the government's approval of proposals to extend the London City airport and to build a bridge across the Thames in east London.

The extension of the airport runway from 1,030 metres to 1,199 metres will enable jet aircraft to use it and will open it up to more destinations in Europe. The river crossing will help to improve a notoriously congested part of the

road network, giving access to the rest of the national road system and the Channel ports and tunnel.

At the same time, Mr Heseltine rejected a proposal for a heliport on the north bank of the Thames in the City of London, on the grounds that the environmental disadvantages outweighed its benefits.

However, the announcements were overshadowed by the European Commission's determination to carry out a full environmental impact study into the river crossing, which could delay the project

for years and possibly prevent it from going ahead at all.

Carlo Ripa di Meana, the environment commissioner, has drafted a letter to the environment and transport secretaries, which has not yet been sent. Under EC law, receipt of a formal letter of complaint from Signor Ripa di Meana would signal the initiation of legal proceedings against the government, which could ultimately result in Britain being taken to the European Court of Justice in Luxembourg for violating EC directives.

Mr Heseltine said yesterday

that he had not received a letter and could not be expected to take it into account.

The Docklands schemes were approved by Mr Heseltine and Malcolm Rifkind, the transport secretary, in line with recommendations from government inspectors after public enquiries into each case.

Mr Heseltine said yesterday that the issues were of considerable importance and the decision to go ahead would have a big impact on the development of Docklands, Thamesmead and the area along the east London corridor.

The box girder bridge, recommended ahead of an alternative and admittedly superior design, will be 1,640 metres long and carry two three-lane carriageways. The main span of 240 metres will be the longest of its type in the UK and only 20 metres shorter than the world's longest concrete box girder bridge, Gateway Bridge in Australia. The environment and transport secretaries accepted that the design lacked the splendour of the alternative, but said it would be "an impressive box girder design of high visual quality and be distinctive in its setting".

They also believed that to consider the alternative, a Spanish design by Santiago Calatrava, would cause unacceptable delay to a scheme of great importance in helping to regenerate the area.

Explaining his rejection of the proposals for a heliport by Cannon Street railway bridge, Mr Heseltine said that it would cause substantial harm through noise and visual impact and that the economic advantages were not sufficient. He recognised the demand for a heliport serving central London and has asked the transport secretary to study alternative and more suitable sites.

David Hardy, chairman of the London Docklands Development Corporation, welcomed the decisions, saying they were good news for business in Docklands, the City and east London.

Ancient wood is cut in two

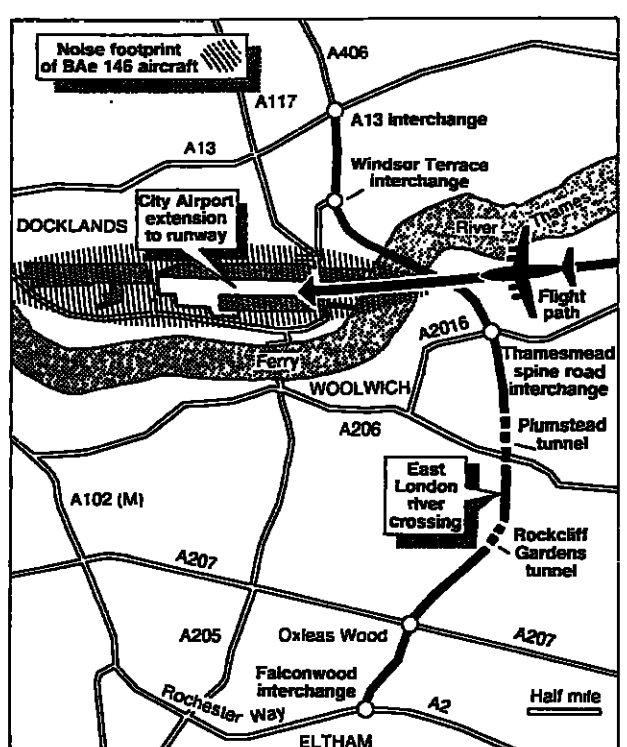
LONDON'S last remaining stretch of ancient woodland will be sliced in two by the approach roads needed for the new east London river crossing announced yesterday by Michael Heseltine, the environment secretary (Michael Dynes writes).

The southern approach road, which will link the A2 at Falconwood with the A13 at Beckton, north of the Thames, will cut a 120ft corridor through a corner of the 8,000-year-old Oxleas wood near Greenwich in southeast London, which has been designated a site of special scientific interest.

Malcolm Rifkind, the transport secretary, defended the decision on the grounds that the new crossing at Gallion's Reach would relieve congestion on existing river crossings in east London, improve access to the Docklands area, and provide a coherent road network for long-distance traffic moving around London.

The new box girder bridge will be 1,640 metres long, with two three-lane carriageways. The central span of 240 metres will make the bridge the longest of its type in Britain.

The decision was welcomed last night by Edmund King, secretary of Movement for London. "It will help bridge the gap with Europe through better road and air links," he



Brussels plan would require salmonella tests on all chickens

By MICHAEL HORNSBY, AGRICULTURE CORRESPONDENT

THE European Community is discussing a plan to introduce compulsory testing of poultry for salmonella in all 12 member states.

The new regulation, proposed by Brussels, would go further than existing British law by requiring the testing of broilers — chickens raised for eating — as well as egg-laying birds.

Testing of egg-laying flocks started in Britain in March 1989 after the salmonella-in-eggs furore involving Edwina Currie, the former junior health minister. The government wanted similar measures introduced by other EC countries but saw no need to include broilers.

Under the proposals, broilers would have to be tested for salmonella enteritidis and salmonella typhimurium when a day old and again three weeks before slaughter. The tests would be conducted on pooled faecal samples from up to 60 birds. If infection was found, no birds from that flock could be sold as fresh meat. It would have to be cooked or undergo some form of disinfecting treatment.

Only about 3 per cent of all birds are thought to be infected with salmonella enteritidis. But infection is easily spread in modern slaughtering and processing plants where birds are decapitated, eviscerated, plucked and washed in close proximity on conveyor belt systems. The proposals should reduce the number of infected birds reaching consumers.

The agriculture ministry said yesterday: "We do want to see a level playing field in Europe. At present, eggs from untested flocks abroad can be sold in this country and that is unsatisfactory. But we think the extension of compulsory testing to broiler flocks is superfluous and should not form part of a common policy for Europe."

John Roberts, senior poultry adviser to the National Farmers' Union, said: "This seems to us the wrong way to tackle the problem. The right way is to test the breeder flocks and feedingstuffs, which is what we are already doing in Britain. Testing birds before slaughter is not foolproof because it takes nearly three weeks to get a result."

There was a guarded welcome, however, from the United Kingdom Egg Producers' Association. Keith Pullman, its secretary, said: "We have always said it was wrong that broiler flocks should escape rigorous testing. But broilers from infected flocks could end up competing with our 'spent' hens on the processed meat market."

The proposal would also change the testing requirements for egg-laying flocks. There would be no requirement for compulsory slaughter, and hence no compensation. Instead, eggs from

infected flocks would have to be pasteurised and sold to the processing trade.

Richard North, a freelance environmental health consultant who advises the egg industry, said an extra 1,500 civil servants might be needed to carry out the tests and supervise infected flocks, costing £60 million. "The effect of the tests is likely to be marginal and the money could be better spent by enforcing proper hygiene rules in catering and food manufacturing premises," he said.

There are 70 million broilers in Britain on 1,900 poultry farms, 55 per cent of which have more than 100,000 birds, and 32 million layers on 32,000 farms. Up to last Sunday, the agriculture ministry had slaughtered 2.58 million egg-laying birds and paid out £3.96 million in compensation. Although cases of salmonella enteritidis in humans have declined, the efficacy of the slaughter policy is disputed.

Carefree record flyers reunited

By RAY CLANCY

THE woman who set the record for a flight from London to Cape Town in 1937 has been reunited with her old plane at White Waltham aerodrome, Berkshire, after it was restored by retired British Aerospace engineers.

Betty Heycock, aged 85, was one of a crew of two that flew the de Havilland Comet from Croydon to Cape Town and back in five days, 17 hours and 28 minutes, beating Amy Johnson's one-way record to South Africa.

Her fellow pilot, Flying Officer Arthur Clouston, wrote in his report at the time: "Mrs Kirby-Green [as she was then known] proved

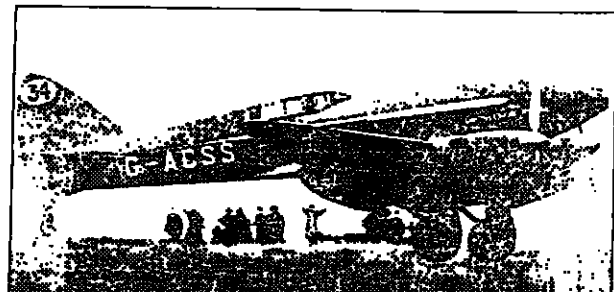
a plucky companion and was able to keep a course well for considerable periods by day and night."

She began flying when she was 30, after being bet £100 that she could not get her wings and fly to Paris within two weeks. She pawned her fur coat to pay for the £25 insurance on a borrowed Gypsy Moth, and completed her first solo flight abroad on July 22, 1937. "I felt that such a flight should be no more than motoring from London to Brighton," she says in her new book *Put it Down to Experience*.

The restored plane will be housed in the Shuttleworth collection in Bedfordshire.



Back in the cockpit: Betty Heycock in the restored de Havilland Comet at White Waltham yesterday and, right, as the plane was in 1937



Church musicians pipe up for organists

By RUTH GLEDHILL, RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

THE Church of England's ancient and renowned musical tradition is being threatened by a shortage of organists, according to its leading musicians.

An "adopt an organist" scheme, which urged parishes to encourage aspiring organists as apprentices, has not been taken up by any church. According to a survey by one archdeaconry published in yesterday's *Church Times*, only one organist in five is under the age of 40. Churches are instead turning to new technology, singing hymns accompanied by cassette tapes while organs, often restored at great cost and after lengthy appeals, gather dust.

Leading organists have formed a committee to launch the National Organ Teachers Encouragement Scheme (Notes) in an attempt to address the problem. Anne Marsden Thomas, organist at St Giles Cripplegate church, London, said many would-be organists had wanted to learn the organ, but were denied access to churches to practise.

Nicholas Danby, head of organ studies at the Royal Academy of Music, one of the organisers of Notes, said cathedrals and large churches were well supplied with skilled organists. "But in the smaller conurbations there is a serious shortage. Church music is part of our cultural heritage. Unless it is looked after and enhanced, the whole tradition will collapse."

The Archdeacon of Wiltshire, the Ven John Smith, predicted that "a problem of mammoth proportions" will hit the churches within the next 20 years unless more is done to recruit young organists.

Bar puts pressure for reform on Baker

By FRANCES GIBB, LEGAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT

KENNETH Baker will face calls for immediate action to reform the criminal justice system when he gives the keynote address at the annual Bar Conference which opens in London today.

The criminal justice system is again under scrutiny after the home secretary on Thursday referred to the Court of Appeal the cases of two men found guilty of the murder of PC Keith Blakelock in the Broadwater Farm riot in 1985.

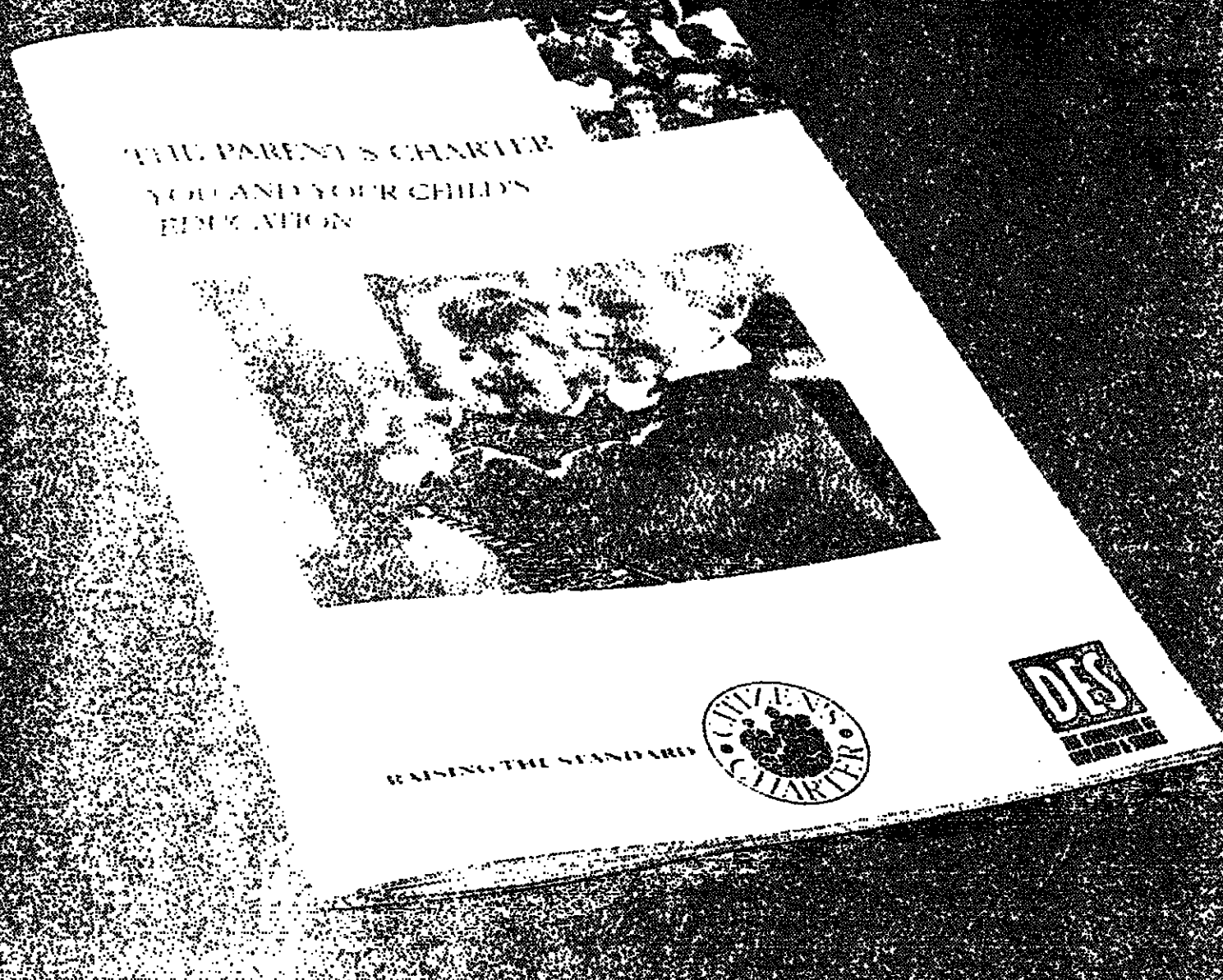
Yesterday Anthony Scrivener, QC, the Bar chairman, said: "As barristers we are at the sharp end of law and order, yet the Home Office never consults us on proposals for reform."

The setting up of a royal commission on criminal justice is welcome, the Bar believes, but not in itself an adequate response to failings in the system. It is pressing first for a change so that defendants cannot be convicted on evidence of their confession to the police alone. Second, it wants the Criminal Appeals Act 1968 amended so that when fresh evidence emerges, the convicted person has a right for it to go before a jury.

The council's "cabinet" — its general management committee — has also thrown its weight behind a ministry of justice, with responsibility for law and order being brought under one government department and one minister.

The two-day conference is expected to be attended by several hundred barristers as well as members of the judiciary. There will be about 50 addresses on subjects ranging from race discrimination law to human rights in the context of the European Convention on Human Rights.

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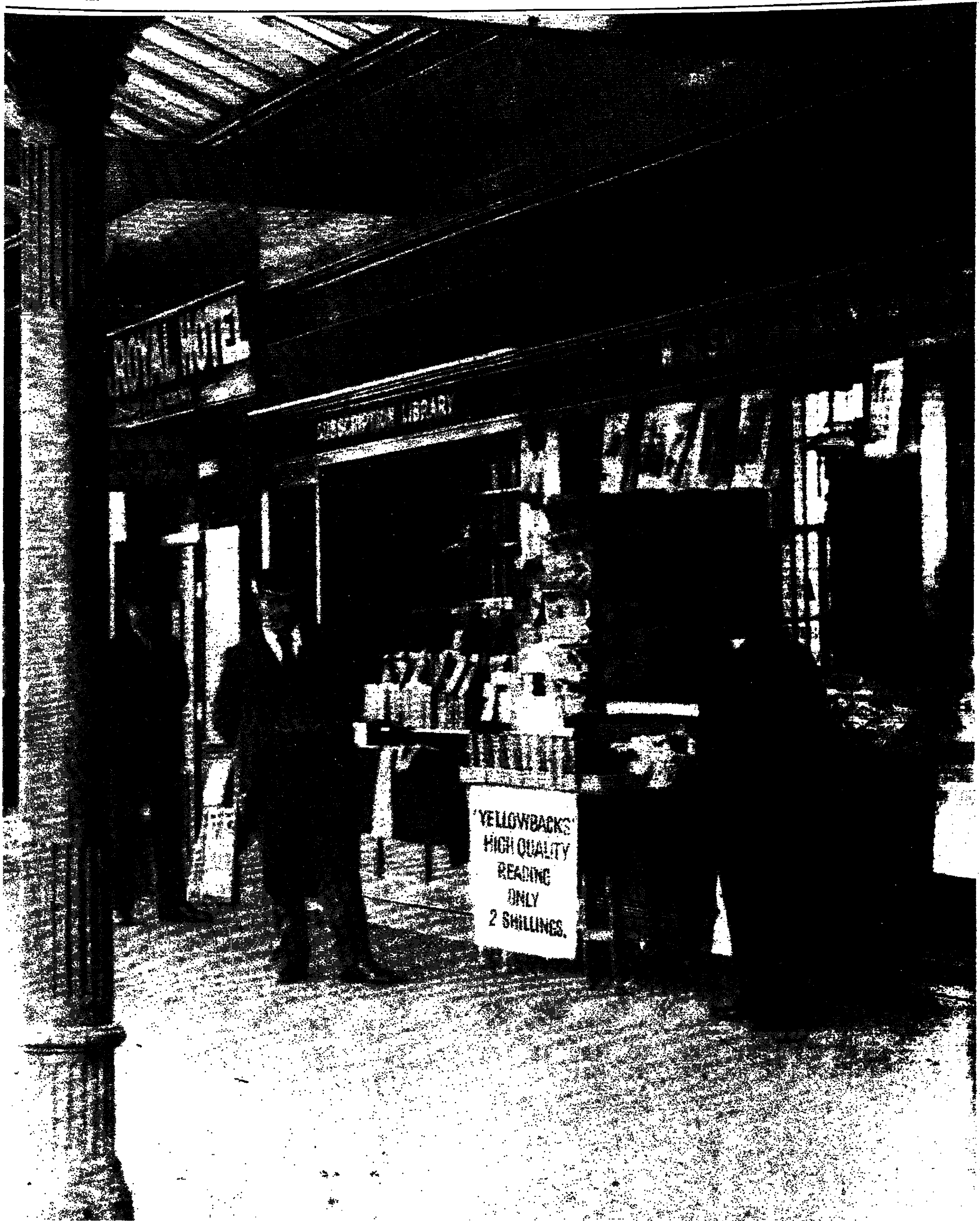
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Refit brings hope to the 'towers of terror'

CHRIS HARRIS

Security cameras and video phones have revitalised a south London estate where fear once ruled the residents' lives, writes Lin Jenkins

THREE tower blocks, refurbished after two elderly residents died when they barricaded themselves into their home because they were afraid of burglars, were handed over to residents yesterday.

The final touch to the refurbishments on Grantham Road estate, in Stockwell, south London, will be a memorial seat to the couple whose fate prompted a vigorous campaign by their neighbours to restore the homes.

Victor and Audrey Johnson died in a fire in their flat in Pinter House in January 1989. Firemen could not rescue them in time because they could not hammer their way through the door, which was covered by a steel grille. The couple were overcome by smoke.

For years Mr Johnson, aged 57, and his wife, aged 54, had seen the high-rise blocks decay and become places of fear, like many others throughout the country. Vandalism and violence rose to the point where they barricaded themselves all too successfully against the world outside.

A neighbour, aged 23, was jailed for their manslaughter. He had been found guilty of paying two teenagers £100 each to pour petrol through their letterbox and set it alight after the couple complained to him about playing his stereo too loudly. The two juveniles, who were injured when the petrol blew up in their faces, were each ordered to spend four and a half years in youth custody.

The tragedy prompted John Patten, the then Home Office minister, to visit the area and authorise improvements. Now, after the spending of nearly £3 million, the tenants hope their blocks will be a model for others.

Joyce Hooper, who has been instrumental in press-



Feeling of security: residents of the Grantham Road estate looking in on the new central control room and its video monitors, part of the estate's £3 million refurbishment

ing for the improvements, said: "They were formerly known as the towers of terror, and we will willingly shake that off now. The last three years has been like seeing a miracle being built."

Yesterday, as the contractors handed Pinter House, Arden House and Beckett House, with their 252 maisonettes, back to Lambeth council, the rear doors were locked and the new front entrances, with their sophisticated electronic security systems and a concierge, opened. The entry halls are an addition, built in a mock classical style which tends to emphasise the ugliness of the Sixties structure behind.

Each home has an entry-phone with a video link to the front door, and eight video cameras in the lifts and corridors are linked to the tenants' television sets, showing shots from four of

the cameras at a time, and rolling on every seven seconds.

Miss Hooper sat watching hers. "Oh look, there's Mrs Dale getting in the lift, and look at that man, he's picking his nose," she said.

In daylight hours, the gadget may provide some amusement, but its role in making the tenants feel safer in their homes is immeasurable. The pictures are watched from a central control room, and all are recorded and kept to help police should crime return to the estate.

Reinforced doors in steel frames have been fitted, at a cost of £1,000, to each maisonette. Originally, the tenants' association was told it could have new doors on 80 of the homes, but not all. "How could we possibly have chosen which?" asked Harry Mason, who has lived there for 21 years. The

change has seen the crime rate drop overnight. Corridors have been transformed from stark concrete and lighting has been improved throughout.

But it is the pride and determination of the residents which has done most to change the atmosphere. Miss Hooper and David Hirst cleaned the lifts and corridors of graffiti by hand and badgered others into hanging plants and pictures in the common parts. Still they get stolen, but at the moment, people are prepared to replace them.

Louisa Norfield said: "I've just had my last three plants taken and we know there are people around who will take things and not look after what is there. But we feel much safer and it is up to everyone to make it stay this way." It is a view which is common among the residents.



After the fire: the steel grille which barricaded the door of the Johnsons' home

Civic head 'beaten up' after vote on jobs

The deputy lord mayor of Liverpool was beaten up on the order of a union boss, a jury was told yesterday. The attack was carried out, it was alleged, because it was wrongly thought that Trevor Smith, now lord mayor, had voted for council redundancies.

Ian Lowes, a General Municipal and Boilermakers' Union convener, ordered Walter Dunbar, aged 38, to "do" Mr Smith while all three were in a public house. Liverpool crown court was told, Mr Smith had tried to calm things when two councillors who had backed cuts were abused.

Mr Dunbar was alleged to have said: "I got told he voted for redundancies." He allegedly told police that he had acted in self-defence after Mr Smith came at him "ranting".

Mr Dunbar, of Fazakerley, Liverpool, denies assault causing actual bodily harm. The trial continues on Monday.

Crash damages

Damages of £243,000 have been awarded to Anne Roberts, aged 33, of Thetford, Norfolk, against her husband Robert, declared by Mr Justice Otton "wholly to blame" for a car crash three years ago that has left her in a coma.

Rival blinded

Julie Nickols, aged 22, of Hedgesford, Staffordshire, was jailed for five years for blinding a workmate, Dawn Masters, 23, with a broken glass because they were dating the same man. She denied, at Stafford crown court, causing grievous bodily harm with intent.

Rail death

Steven Leathers, aged 16, of Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, who was killed last Saturday by a train on a crossing had been fleeing after being caught skylarking on a factory roof after a night out, an inquest was told. The inquest was adjourned.

Out of season

Staff at Ford's clothes shop at Beeston, Nottingham, have taken down a Christmas tree after complaints that its early display trivialised Christmas.

"You can't always find a payphone when you need one, and they don't always work."

MR K. WALTON, HALIFAX



"What I hate is them not turning up when they said they would."

MRS B. CHAPLEY, SOUTHAMPTON



"I can never understand the charges on the phone bill."

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Palestinians braced to accept need for peace conference

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN JERUSALEM

PALESTINIAN leaders meeting in Algiers were last night poised to approve overwhelmingly Palestinian participation in next month's proposed Middle East peace conference. The move is expected to bring prospects of a settlement to the Middle East conflict closer and pave the way for James Baker, the United States Secretary of State, to complete details for the conference. Palestinian approval would mean that Mr Baker had secured the acceptance of all key parties in the Arab-Israeli conflict for an unprecedented dialogue.

Bassam Abu Sharif, a close

aide of Yasser Arafat, the chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organisation, yesterday predicted "a big yes" from the 413 delegates of the Palestine National Council in spite of opposition from Palestinian radicals based in Damascus, who this week advocated the "military option" against Israel as the only alternative to capitulation. "The overwhelming majority are favourable to authorising the new executive committee to participate in the peace conference according to international legality," Mr Abu Sharif said.

The move is likely to im-

prove Mr Arafat's badly battered image in the West and among Arab states, after his disastrous support for Iraq in the Gulf war. But it also threatens to deepen the existing split between his supporters and the rejectionist Palestinian factions.

In spite of the predicted Palestinian approval, attendance at the conference will be conditional on what guarantees Washington is prepared to give on the status of Arab east Jerusalem - occupied and annexed by Israel in 1967 - the composition of the Palestinian delegation to the talks and a freeze on construction of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

Israel insists that the status of Jerusalem is non-negotiable, that it will not halt settlement construction or give up occupied lands, and that it refuses to talk to Palestinians who are members of the PLO, or who live outside the West Bank or Gaza Strip. The Palestinians reject all the Israeli demands.

Mr Baker is expected to return to the region at the beginning of next month in order to bridge these last gaps and squeeze compromises from both the Israeli and Arab sides. Once that is completed, and each participant is given an American letter of assurance setting out the parameters of the negotiations, Washington and Moscow will issue formal invitations to the conference.

Although Moscow has until now remained the silent partner in the peace initiative, President Gorbachev said yesterday that he believed the talks would still go ahead next month. "We are acting on the basis of precisely such a time scale," he said after meeting President Mubarak of Egypt at the Kremlin. "I think this process is so essential, and we have come so close to it, that all sides understand their responsibility and are taking steps." Mr Mubarak predicted that the talks could continue for one or two years.

Shamir refusal: Yitzhak Shamir, the Israeli prime minister, yesterday ruled out a role in peace talks for Hanan Ashrawi and Faisal al-Husseini, two Palestinian leaders who could face prosecution for attending the PLO meeting in Algiers. Both have denied they were there. They are residents of east Jerusalem and Mr Shamir refuses to accept east Jerusalem residents or PLO members at the conference. (Reuters)



Tears of joy: surrogate mother Elvira Jordan is congratulated by her attorney, Richard Gilbert, after a Californian court ruled that she should share custody of her daughter Marissa, aged 16 months, with the girl's biological father. The Santa Ana court ruling

stunned Robert Moschetti, who contracted to father the child by artificial insemination before his marriage broke up (AP reports). The judge ignored a report by court-appointed experts that said Mr Moschetti, aged 35, should have sole custody of

Marissa. "I cannot comprehend why that expert report was not upheld... It's a huge mistake," Mr Moschetti said. Ms Jordan, aged 42, was jubilant: "I got my daughter back." The report had recommended only right of access visits for Ms Jordan.

Iraq stalls over freeing UN team

FROM JAMES BONE IN NEW YORK

IRAQ continued to tease the United Nations yesterday by stalling on its promise to release the UN inspectors blockaded for four days in a Baghdad car park and raising new difficulties on the use of UN helicopters.

The Iraqis appeared to be trying to suck the United Nations into negotiations on the terms of mandatory security council resolutions, an Iraqi goal since the first UN response to the invasion of Kuwait. As one diplomat from a permanent council member put it: "It is a test of nerves and strength." The head of the UN weapons inspection team held hostage in Baghdad said there was no sign that Iraqi officials were ready to free them, despite the security council's agreement to provide Iraq with a joint log of documents removed.

"We've had absolutely no change and we've watched very closely for it," David Kay, the UN team leader, said by satellite telephone. "The guard force is the same, the attitude seems to be exactly the same. No improvement at all; it's very strange." At the same time, the security council was waiting to see if Iraq would retract a letter sent on Thursday night which appeared to reimpose Baghdad's original conditions on the use of helicopters by UN officials.

The letter said Iraq "reaffirms that the requirements it has already put forward have to be fulfilled." Even though the UN special commission to disarm Iraq plans

to fly the first helicopters on Sunday, the Iraqi letter said there should be no flights until the commission's chairman, Rolf Ekeus, went to Baghdad to agree details. Mr Ekeus has said he sees no reason to go to Baghdad until after agreement is reached.

The security council decided to ignore the inconvenient Iraqi letter, judging that it crossed with a message to Iraq from Mr Ekeus about the arrangements for the first helicopter mission. But Western diplomats reiterated yesterday that, if Iraq refused to co-operate with UN inspection flights, America, Britain and France were still ready to use military pressure.

It was reported that the United States had been establishing a helicopter base in northeastern Saudi Arabia to support UN inspection missions inside Iraq. Washington had also drawn up a list of targets that allied planes could strike if Iraq persisted in its defiance of the United Nations. But *The New York Times* said the Bush administration had halted plans to send attack helicopters and additional warplanes to Saudi Arabia because of Saudi reservations.

The 44-member UN inspection team trapped outside the Iraqi atomic energy agency began making preparations yesterday to draw up a list of the documents they want to remove, which detail foreign companies' involvement in Iraq's nuclear weapons programme.

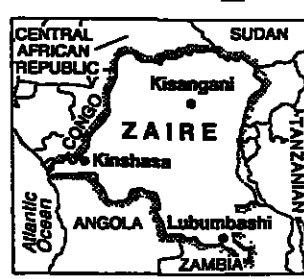
Westerners raped in Zaire capital

FROM SAM KILEY IN KINSHASA

TWO Western women were raped by looters rampaging through Zaire's capital over the past five days, the Belgian embassy said yesterday. A handful of Westerners were wounded, but none were killed while Kinshasa was being devastated by soldiers and civilians.

Médecins Sans Frontières had estimated that about 100 people had been killed and another 1,200 wounded in rioting. Yesterday, women scrambled for dog food and nuggets of maize meal left on the floor on Kinshasa's giant 'Moto' supermarket, as men helped themselves to the building's gutting and roof.

Although French and Belgian troops have restored a semblance of order in the capital, and in Kinsangani to the east and Lubumbashi to the south, the continued looting is a sign that Zaire remains in a power vacuum and its citizens in a desperate state. Aid agencies say that, even with the presence of some 1,800 foreign troops, mainly French and Belgian, in key



positions all over the country, the capital will be stricken by food shortages that could set off another bout of violent rioting with days.

France said yesterday that 40 tonnes of emergency food and medical supplies had arrived in neighbouring Congo, to be transported to Zaire. But the food, cooking oil, flour and rice, is a drop in the ocean for Kinshasa's three million residents.

On the Avenue Bokassa, named after the former self-styled emperor of the Central African Republic, people openly looted prefabricated Italian furniture into a van. Next door, where looters had driven brand new cars through

the show room windows, a graffiti artist with a sense of humour, summing up the free for all in the capital, had scrawled "Merci". But President Mobutu, who refused his military forces' demand that they receive a pay increase last Sunday, remains confident of his ability to maintain order in spite of warnings from soldiers that they would take to the streets and help themselves.

According to Western diplomats he received the credentials of Jean Coene, the new Belgian ambassador, at the height of the violence on Tuesday and said that all was calm. All Western diplomats contacted in Kinshasa yesterday, said they were at a loss to predict what Zaire's politicians could do to restore order. They said that the population had probably lost confidence in the ability of their rulers to govern the country.

Some speculated that President Mobutu, who according to Forbes magazine has salted away \$5 billion (£2.8 billion) of Zaire's national reserves in foreign bank accounts and owns a series of houses all

over Europe, might be persuaded to hop aboard a French or Belgian aircraft and retire to well heeled exile. This would leave his people to choose a new government under foreign supervision.

"But Mobutu is also a great survivor," cautioned one Western ambassador as analysts predicted the fall of one of Africa's last dictators. "Perhaps people will have been chastened after this experience and join a new national conference with the genuine will to find a solution," he added. Mr Mobutu and his ministers have been conspicuous by their absence over the last week. Most of the cabinet has taken up residence in the Inter Continental hotel where they are protected by those elements of the presidential guard not out looting.

But as some estimates put the capital's stocks of food at enough for four days and fuel is desperately short. Thousands of foreign nationals have been evacuated and others continue to stream across the Congo River to the Congolese capital Brazzaville, under French military supervision.

Jail threat shadows film star's fiancé

New York - Elizabeth Taylor caused enough of a stir simply by announcing that her eighth marriage would be to a building worker, 20 years younger than herself, whom she met in a drug abuse clinic (James Bone writes).

Now it has emerged that her husband-to-be, Larry Fortensky, faces an old warrant for his arrest which carries a maximum sentence of a year in jail. Mr Fortensky, aged 39, who met the Hollywood superstar in the Betty Ford Clinic in California in 1988, is accused of violating his probation after pleading guilty to drunken driving in 1987. The warrant says he failed to provide proof that he had enrolled in a three-month alcohol treatment programme that was a condition of his probation.

It was not clear whether Mr Fortensky's stay at the Betty Ford Clinic would satisfy the court's demand. Miss Taylor was herself recovering yesterday from a near-collapse on Tuesday in Houston, the eighth stop on a 10-city tour to promote her latest line of perfume.

Sentence upheld

Washington - A federal judge sentenced Marion Barry, the former mayor of Washington, to six months in prison and a \$5,000 (£2,880) fine for cocaine possession, confirming the sentence he originally handed down a year ago before Mr Barry's appeals. The judge rejected arguments that he had suffered enough.

Dayaks' choice

Kuching - Tribesmen have been trekking through the Borneo rain forest to vote in elections in the Malaysian state of Sarawak. Nearly 700,000 voters began casting their ballots in the oil-rich state, where the nationalist Bangsa Dayak Sarawak party is challenging the state government. (Reuters)

Diplomat shot

Lisbon - Francisco Rosario, a representative of the East Timor independence movement, accredited as a diplomat in the Angolan capital, has been shot dead in broad daylight, Angolan television reported. He was shot by two men as he entered the lobby of the apartment block where he lived with his family. (Reuters)

Mongolia visit

Ulaan Bator - The Dalai Lama was mobbed by the Buddhist faithful on his first visit to Mongolia since democracy took root last year after decades of Soviet control. Some 15,000 people outside a monastery surged towards his car to glimpse their highest spiritual leader. (Reuters)

Burial refused

La Paz - The Bolivian government said it would not allow Klaus Barbie, the Nazi "Butcher of Lyons", to be buried here where he hid for 33 years. Barbie died of cancer on Wednesday aged 77 in prison in the French city of Lyons, where as Gestapo chief he had ordered the execution of thousands. (Reuters)

Boulez ill

Paris (AFP) - Pierre Boulez, aged 66, the French composer and conductor, has cancelled a series of European appearances for unspecified health reasons. The Ensemble Intercontemporain said that he will be replaced by Esa-Pekka Salonen, the Finnish conductor, in London on October 14 and 15. (AFP)

Fancy pants

Toronto - A Canadian store chain is to stop selling women's boxer shorts which have NOINON printed in black all over them, changing to a neon green YESYESYES! in the dark. Susan Pettigrew, a mother of two, complained that the shorts made light of a No-Means-No campaign against rape. (Reuters)

Rebel ambush

Manila - The communist New People's Army, which has been fighting for 22 years to establish a marxist state in the Philippines, killed 26 government soldiers and two civilians in ambushes just days after calling off a unilateral ceasefire, the military said. An unknown number of rebels were killed. (Reuters)

Snake feast

Delhi - A 10ft python was recovering from surgery after trying to swallow a goat, the United News of India said. The snake apparently panicked at the sight of advancing villagers, near Chhotia Udepur in western Gujarat state, and tore its throat while trying to regurgitate the goat. There was no news of the goat. (Reuters)

Accord on boat people far off

FROM JONATHAN BRAUDE IN HONG KONG

BRITAIN and Vietnam yesterday agreed on the need to speed up the return of tens of thousands of boat people in Hong Kong's crowded detention camps, but were still far from a final accord.

A joint statement issued after week-long talks in Hanoi between British, Vietnamese and United Nations officials emphasised that the slow pace of repatriation from Hong Kong had to be speeded up. The communiqué avoided using the phrase "mandatory repatriation", leading to speculation here that Hanoi might have dropped its opposition to forced repatriation. However, the Foreign Office assistant undersecretary for Asia, Andrew Burns, refused to discuss the details of the talks, saying only that whatever had been agreed was in line with the existing international agreements on the boat people and insisting he must first return to London for consultations.

The joint statement also used for the first time the words "illegal immigrants" to describe non-refugees. But American opposition to any forced return of boat people to Vietnam remains an obstacle. Britain, it is understood, has been lobbying American officials at the United Nations to persuade them to change their position. The statement said further discussions and "consultations in capitals" were required.

Analysis here said it was hard to imagine Vietnam accepting deportation without Washington's consent as it desperately wanted the American trade embargo, imposed after the end of the Vietnam war, lifted.

L-plate lovers have a ball with Sony's Cinderella

FROM JOANNA PITMAN IN TOKYO

IN ENGLAND when Kevin plans a date with Tracy, he might polish the Ford Cortina, take her for a spin down to Brighton, and end up necking to Sheena Easton on the back seat, perched on Beachy Head. In Japan, when callow Kenji wants to get fresh with Tetsuko, he invests in a copy of *Cinderella*.

This is a new compact disc by Sony, to be played in the car while Kenji and Tetsuko cruise round Sony's prescribed "nocturnal romance course". The CD and its accompanying literature offer a guide in ten easy steps to manoeuvring timid Tetsuko from candle-lit dinner in Yokohama, into Kenji's convertible and straight into the bedroom booked at Sony's recommended "love hotel" near Tokyo Disneyland. But Kenji must make it snappy, as the CD offers only 45 minutes of musical foreplay.

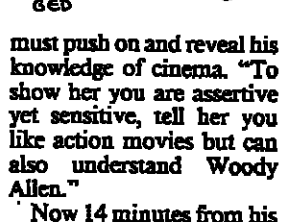
With successively more suggestive songs from *Cinderella* playing at full volume, however, and with the scripted small talk, pre-scripted route map and seduction instructions committed to memory, Kenji is guaranteed to turn on Tetsuko by leg ten of the drive, 45 minutes and 26 miles from the start, and just as the final track, *It's Only You*, begins on his car's sound system.

More than 20,000 aspiring Romeo have bought copies of *Cinderella* since its release in July. Yokohama Bay Bridge (to be admired to the sounds of *Heaven in the Night-time*) must be crowded every Saturday night with cars and Kenjis, all mouthing

sweet nothings into shell-like ears. The background briefing and chit-chat guide are designed to see Kenji through, conversationally, from dinner table to futon. By section three of the route (after 4 miles, 9 minutes) Kenji should be bowling along past such scenic highlights as the Kyohama industrial complex and confiding his tastes in music. "Don't try to show off knowledge of the hit charts," advises the pamphlet. "Tell her you admire mature and intelligent artists. We recommend Sting and Sinead O'Connor."

As they pass the oil refineries, discerning Kenji

Have you heard of... Yes... This is the Cinderella? Pumpkin?



must push on and reveal his knowledge of cinema. "To show her you are assertive yet sensitive, tell her you like action movies but can also understand Woody Allen."

Now 14 minutes from his target, the musical beat warms up with *Night Runner*, and Kenji cleverly lets drop that he doesn't watch much television. In fact, he has followed the leader's advice and boned up all week on the trivia imparted on popular programmes for Japanese girls in their twenties. He now knows a thing or two about ladderproof

nylons and can list the snags of DIY manures.

By now Tetsuko should be limp with admiration. Time to lighten up with a joke. "Girls like a funny man," the guide informs him. "You should practise jokes with your friends, because they create a relaxed atmosphere. Always remember that laughing together is a short cut to bed."

As his car approaches Haneda airport, Kenji is told to start giving her the glad eye. Correct interpretation of body language is crucial here, cautions the guide. If she keeps touching her throat or ears, then she apparently "wants to play baby" and the Sony magic is working.

Tetsuko's one chance of delivery from his off-the-peg advances is that Yokohama's traffic congestion snarls up the synchronised romance tour.

● Film festival: The Tokyo International Film Festival, which opened yesterday, may lack the glamour of Cannes, but is making its mark. "The distinguishing characteristic of this festival is Japanese money," said Yanyoshi Tokuma, director general of the festival organising committee. The festival's budget is one billion yen (£4.3 million), more than any film festival except Cannes, he said.

Films such as Alan Parker's *The Commitments* and Volker Schlöndorff's *Voyager* are vying for the grand prix in the international competition. "Japan is now the second-biggest film market in the world," after the United States, said Edward Freeman, producer of *Wall Street*. (Reuters)

Imam sued over visit by princess

FROM CHRISTOPHER THOMAS IN LAHORE

A PAKISTANI religious leader who allowed the Princess of Wales to enter a mosque in a knee-length dress on Wednesday has been sued and ordered to appear in court by a magistrate in Lahore today.

Mufti Molana Abdul Qadir Azad, imam of Badshahi mosque in Lahore, came in for a barrage of criticism in reports in Urdu-language newspapers yesterday. The imam escorted the princess, who was wearing a dress with a V-neck line, around the mosque.

A Lahore lawyer, Suhail Ahmad Roomi, filed a civil suit in which the religious leader is accused of allowing the princess in to the building while improperly attired. The imam, known as a hardline fundamentalist, was also criticised by the Pakistan People Workers' Forum, a labour organisation, but not on the ground of offending Islamic custom. It said he was inconsistent in maintaining a fundamentalist reputation while showing the "bare-legged princess" round his mosque.



Capboard love: Kathy Willets, a self-styled nymphomaniac, and her husband, Jeffrey, relax after a favourable court ruling at Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on a charge of prostitution. Mrs Willets, aged 33, admitting having sex with men while her husband watched and videoed the sessions from inside a wardrobe. (Reuters)

Peru's poor defy the guerrillas

FROM CORINNE SCHMIDT IN LIMA

THOUSANDS of Lima's poorest people marched yesterday to protest against attacks by Maoist Shining Path guerrillas on community organisations in the slums.

Earlier this month, the Shining Path murdered Juana López, a neighbourhood leader of a grassroots organisation. A week later a food warehouse was dynamited and two community leaders killed. The attacks, with marches and theft and distribution of food

supplies, are part of a strategy to tighten the Shining Path's hold on the slums, says Carlos Tapia, an expert on the group. "The tactics are working. The Shining Path is winning in those areas," he said.

President Fujimori returned from America last week with news of Peru's readmittance to the international financial community. In apparent response, last night the Shining Path blacked out Lima and bombed several banks.

Peru's poor have paid dearly for their country's austerity programme which has been approved by the International Monetary Fund. Ninety per cent of the capital's residents live in poverty, but communal kitchens help.

"These women's organisations are the only obstacle to the Shining Path in Lima," said Esther Moreno, a congresswoman. "So they try to dominate or destroy them. They need hunger and chaos."

Georgia conflict pits Hampstead elite against East Enders



Shevardnadze: pilloried for death of hijackers

SOME of Georgia's best and brightest sons and daughters waited yesterday at the Tbilisi television centre in a mood of calmness and good humour, considering the terrifying night through which most of them had lived as rumours spread that many had been killed in clashes between forces backing President Gamsakhurdia and soldiers who have defected to the opposition.

From a distance, the pro- and anti-government forces in Georgia's political conflict and the civilian volunteers backing them, look similar: soldiers on both sides sport the same camouflage uniforms, Kalashnikovs and star-shaped badges depicting St. George. But a visit to either camp quickly brings home the extent to which Georgia has split down the

middle: not exactly between rich and poor, but more between the cultured, liberal minority, and the authoritarian majority. It is as though Hampstead Garden Suburb was at war with the East End.

A remarkable number of the unshaven but gentle giants keeping weary vigil with their machineguns at the television centre speak good English, and one even answered questions in fluent Latin. Indeed, some of President Gamsakhurdia's soldiers, drilling in the courtyard of the main government building were hard-pressed to speak a coherent Russian sentence.

However, they understand his simple message — that an elected leader, the man who personifies Georgia's struggle to settle accounts with Russia, is under attack by

Liberals and those in power share a deep sense of honour offering the best hope for preventing bloodshed.
Bruce Clark writes from Tbilisi

enemies of the people whose whining about civil liberties is probably a plot inspired by Moscow. Unlike the opposition soldiers, they accept the president's assurances that his move last month to merge the national guard with the police — at the behest of the Moscow coup leaders — was an act of prudence and not treachery.

"It was a temporary measure, nothing more," said one tough-looking youth. "And now 99 per cent of the Georgian people are with the president."

Last week, when critics of

the president, including film directors, philosophy professors, and most of Georgia's television journalists — started picketing the premises, there was a carnival atmosphere: extravagant embraces, shared jokes, and glasses of wine in the balmy evening air. This has partly given way to a mood of tension and anger. But even so the men and women in the crowd are still gripped by a sense of lofty idealism, which makes it hard to remember that they are defying an elected government and not defending one.

"Perhaps we will die like the 300 Spartans at Thermopylae [a Greek battle against the Persians in 480BC], but we are convinced justice will win," said Koba Habazi, a student. "Georgia is a Christian country and it cannot be a diabolical force will win."

Maya, a woman demurely dressed in a smart two-piece suit and pearls, said she had been a staunch supporter of the president until September 2 when police opened fire on demonstrators in Tbilisi. "Now I can see that he is trying to set Georgian against Georgian."

Among the president's soldiers, it is unlikely many people have heard of Thermopylae, but they probably see their own mission in similarly stark moral terms. "Most of the people on the

opposition side are just criminals," said one guardsman. But if the rift in Georgia is deep, it is not necessarily unbridgeable. Western liberal ideas like free speech, pluralism and the due process of law are clearly better understood by some Georgians than others. There are also values of pride, honour, fairness, and a revulsion for the killing of Georgians in any circumstances that run deep. If Eduard Shevardnadze is a prophet without much honour in the republic he once ruled as Communist party boss, it is partly because he ordered the execution of a group of young Georgian hijackers.

Both sides in the current conflict have been able to use the "human shield" principle to great effect, certain that no Georgian command-

er will fire on a crowd that includes non-combatant compatriots and women. Military victory could turn instantly to moral defeat.

"Whichever side fires first in this conflict has lost it," Roman Kvetsadze, the deputy police minister, said on Thursday night. He was speaking only yards away from a potential flashpoint: the Palace of Sports, where pro-government supporters are grouping, prompting the opposition to train an artillery piece on the building.

For much of the night about 100 local residents stood in the potential firing line, furious that their district was being turned into a conflict zone. The best hope of avoiding a bloodbath in the republic is that the Georgian sense of honour will continue to be a factor.

Miners leave as riot police break siege in Bucharest

FROM TIM JUDAH IN BUCHAREST

ROMANIAN riot police using tear gas, rubber bullets and birdshot drove back hundreds of angry coalminers and other anti-government demonstrators yesterday as they besieged Bucharest's Cotroceni palace, the official seat of President Iliescu.

The confrontation came after the miners' leader, Mircea Cosma, had told his men that he had struck a deal with the president and that they should go home. "Cosma has betrayed us," shouted angry miners several hours later as they tried to persuade thousands of their comrades not to return to the Jiu valley where they had come from.

"Dirty, exhausted and hungry," the miners had flooded into the city's Banasa station where trains were waiting for them. Earlier in the day some 2,000 had already left but yesterday evening hundreds of miners armed with staves and axes were still milling around in the centre of Bucharest.

Thousands of miners came to Bucharest on Wednesday to demand the resignation of the prime minister, Petre Roman, and President Iliescu whom they regard as having betrayed them after being called to the capital by him in June 1990 to attack anti-government demonstrators. Now they also came to demand a wage increase and price freeze.

Since their arrival the miners have attacked the government headquarters in Victory



Wave of anger: Romanians confronting guards outside the parliament in Bucharest immediately before sections of the crowd, including miners, broke into the building on Thursday

Bosnia adds to EC's anxieties

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN ZAGREB

AMID continuing violations of last Sunday's flimsy ceasefire, diplomatic moves are under way to extend the mission of the vulnerable European Community monitoring teams in Croatia to the neighbouring republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The teams of observers have been nicknamed the "ice cream men" because of their white coats which make them resemble waiters. In spite of the local ridicule, they are the only outside presence which can bolster the ceasefire under repeated threat from Serb and Croat militia groups.

The moves to extend the monitoring to Bosnia is being masterminded by the European Community's Dutch envoy, Henry Wijnaldus, whose plane came under missile attack near Zagreb on Thursday. His efforts follow reports of wide-scale troop movements in Bosnia, an ethnically mixed republic where any clash could trigger a much greater bloodshed than what has been seen so far in the Yugoslav turmoil.

Both Serbia and Croatia have claimed serious ceasefire violations, with Belgrade accusing Croatia of attacks against the besieged Yugoslav army barracks in the eastern Croatian town of Vukovar, while Zagreb replied that a mortar fired by Serbs in central Croatia killed three children and an elderly man. The continuing violence

is causing concern in EC circles as it is being accompanied by repeated threats by Croat nationalists to retake the territory, amounting to one-third of the republic, lost in recent battles.

Military observers claimed last night that Croat forces had been using the ceasefire period to distribute weapons seized from federal army barracks, as well as recruiting and training men to handle heavy armour, including tanks. The morale of the Croat forces has been also boosted by reports of mass desertions among Yugoslav army conscripts.



Yesterday heavily armed militiamen belonging to the extreme nationalist Croatian Party of Rights left Zagreb, claiming they were on the way to the border areas to resume the fighting. The party, whose private army has rejected attempts by Franjo Tudjman, the Croat president, to control it, has attacked the ceasefire as a "sellout". As the list of ceasefire breaches grows, citizens fear that full-scale fighting will shortly break out.

Cultural toll, page 1

Dutch challenged over draft for union treaty

FROM GEORGE BROCK IN BRUSSELS

THE Dutch government will face demands for the withdrawal of its draft treaty on monetary and political union when European Community foreign ministers arrive here on Monday to consider whether there is any hope of completing a treaty by the end of the year.

Treaty talks have effectively stopped until governments can agree on what they are negotiating about. The Dutch government, which holds the EC's rotating presidency until December, this week tabled a treaty which has been criticised by Britain and seven other states.

The ministers will also discuss the EC's Yugoslav peace conference and the stalled talks on opening up trade with Eastern Europe. At their last meeting, France objected to a proposed increase in imports of Polish beef.

The French government has been promising since that a compromise can be reached, but no new proposals have emerged from Paris. French farmers, who are vociferously opposed to food imports from East Europe, are due to demonstrate in huge numbers in Paris tomorrow.

Britain finds itself in a highly unusual position in European politics — John Major is at the head of a solid majority in attacking the draft treaty. The spectacle is temporary. By the time of the Maastricht summit, Britain

will almost certainly be back in a minority, a position to which its prime ministers are more accustomed. The alliance of governments which would like to bury the radical Dutch draft, led by Britain, is a coalition of convenience and not of principle. If EC foreign ministers can dig themselves out of trouble on Monday and find a way to restart work on the treaty, then the present line-up will dissolve.

The key governments are, as always, Germany and France. Germany was one of only four governments to back the Dutch proposals this week and German officials were by yesterday already starting to edge away from The Netherlands. "We were not really supporting the treaty," one official said, "we just favour some of the ideas and want to get on with the work."

France shares a few of Britain's worries about losses



Dankert gave very little concession to Britain

Moscow retreats in space

London — Important cuts in the Soviet Union's space programme are expected to be announced in the coming weeks. Political sources in Moscow said yesterday that decisions have been taken to axe Buran, the Soviet Union's space shuttle, and that an announcement cancelling Mir 2, the orbiting space station scheduled to be launched in 1992, will also be made.

The decisions signal the first of what experts believe will be a round of harsh cuts that could end the country's status as a space superpower. Mir 2 has been offered to America for \$700 million (\$404 million) as a low cost replacement for its own budget-stalled Freedom space station.

The decision to cancel the Buran project could surprise some Soviet engineers and military experts. The shuttle was scheduled to carry out what engineers had described as the most complex mission ever by an unmanned craft.

The present disarray stems from an extraordinary miscalculation by the Dutch government, which is running EC business until December. Treaty talks have been going on for all of this year but the Dutch government decided to start afresh on several of the most controversial topics: the rights of the European parliament, foreign and defence policy and the separation of national and EC powers.

Because the Dutch foreign minister is bogged down in Yugoslav diplomacy, the job of steering the treaty was given to Piet Dankert, the minister for European affairs. Mr Dankert is close to Ruud Lubbers, the Dutch prime minister, and is a socialist member of the present coalition government in The Hague.

The socialists are under pressure to bring down the coalition over disputes about Dutch disability benefits. To keep the government together, the cabinet gave Mr Dankert most of his own way.

He produced a treaty which made so little concession to British reservations over loss of sovereignty that almost any British government would have to veto it.

The Italian government, enthusiastic for a federal Europe since the 1940s, likes the ideas but is nevertheless attacking the Dutch for derailing the treaty negotiations.

Venus lightning
Pasadena — NASA's Galileo spacecraft has detected the strongest evidence yet that lightning occurs on Venus, according to a study published in *Science*. Galileo detected radio signals produced by six to nine lightning flashes in Venus's sulphuric acid clouds when it flew by the planet last year, the report said. (AP)

Japan pounded
Tokyo — Typhoon Mireille pounded western Japan, killing at least 10 people and blacking out about 3.6 million homes. The national police agency said 234 people had been reported injured. Worst hit was the southwestern island of Kyushu where eight people were killed and nearly 200 injured. (Reuters)

De Klerk visit
Johannesburg — President F.W. de Klerk will visit Israel on November 9 for three days and then fly to Taiwan, the South African Press Association reported. Mr de Klerk's office refused to confirm the report, saying only that further trips by the president were planned this year. (AP)

Ancient tongue teaches computers new tricks

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

COMPUTERS capable of flawlessly translating books, documents and scientific papers from one language into another could soon be rolling off the production lines, courtesy of an ancient language that was first spoken 5,000 years ago by the Aymara Indians of South America.

Ivan Guzmán de Rojas, a mathematician, inventor, and the son of one of Bolivia's most famous painters, claims that the rigid, logical and unambiguous structure of the Aymara language is a natural bridge between the world's Indo-European tongues. The system he has developed will translate English, French, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, German and Swedish, using

Aymara to decode the text of one language and instantly recode it into the new one.

The development has attracted the interest of Bull, the French computer company, which has signed a letter of intent to buy Señor Guzmán's invention which is called Atamiri, the Aymara word for interpreter. If Señor Guzmán's system is as good as is claimed, it might end some of the more sparkling errors which occur when machines are asked to try to translate meanings from one language to another and which have limited their use.

The most classic example of such errors is when "out of sight, out of mind" is translated from English into

Russian and then back into English to come out as "invisible idiot". The dream of flawless computer translation has attracted huge investment over recent decades. The European Community spent several million dollars on an unsuccessful computer translation project. "People saw it (translation) as a linguistic problem. But it is a problem of language engineering, how to translate grammar into algorithms which work in a machine," said Señor Guzmán.

Some groups have developed artificial bridge languages with names like Ariane and Logos, but the results which these have produced have been less than stunning. The idea that

Aymara, a living language which is still spoken by around 2½ million people in Bolivia, Peru and northern Chile, might make a better bridge language came to Señor Guzmán when he was teaching mathematics to Aymara children. His first prototype was produced six years ago with help from his wife, who is a trained linguist, and his son, an engineer.

The system has been tested by the Panama Canal Commission, which used it to translate documents from English into Spanish and Señor Guzmán has had research funds from the Canadian International Centre for Development Research, and from Rostec, Unesco's regional office for

science and technology in Latin America and the Caribbean.

Señor Guzmán, who is negotiating the terms of the deal with Bull, wants the profits which arise from Atamiri to be ploughed back into helping the Indians who have inspired his work. He wants to set up a translation service for the Aymara, most of whom live in poverty on the Andean plain, so that books and news can be made available to them in their native tongue.

Atamiri could then become the saviour of the Aymara language, which has survived 4,000 to 5,000 years but is now being slowly displaced by Spanish.

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DITHERING ON DATES

John Major now has three election-date options open to him. He can plan one this year, which means in late October or early November. He can decide not to hold one until next year, which means the spring. Or he can decline to make up his mind. The case for each of the first two options is strong. The case for the third is dreadful.

Conservative party managers, in so far as they are of one mind, are set on the third. They wish to keep open the option of a November poll, taking the view that Mr Major would be mad not to call an election if he has a month of consecutive opinion polls in his favour by at least four percentage points. Thus there is all of October to go before a decision need be taken on a November date. The current pretence that there may be an election can be sustained. The Opposition can be forced to expend its ammunition. The electorate can be kept on tenterhooks and guessing. Politicians can indulge their favourite pastime, indecision.

Indecision over election timing may be mildly amusing to dilettante politicians. To businessmen, civil servants, bankers and the mass of those whose work is in some part affected by a general election, indecision is damaging. When Britain was last faced with such uncertainty, in autumn 1978, the raising and dashing of expectation did the then prime minister, James Callaghan, no good.

Since Mr Major so far resolutely declines to rule out an election this year, election fever is naturally high. His colleagues are mesmerised by opinion polls, so the fever ebbs and flows with each week's publication. Both parties are now running dummy campaigns with almost daily press conferences and the ritual exchange of abuse. The sense of let-down should there not be an election will not help the government and will give opposition parties a useful line of attack.

The case for going this year is enticing. A drawn-out campaign is bad for the country's administration, with even remotely controversial decisions frozen until after polling day. A long dark winter lies ahead, and with it rising unemployment and no evident relief from the more obvious recessionary in-

dicators, like the housing and job markets. More Tory voters will be thrown out of work by next March. More Tory by-elections will be lost, beginning with embarrassing potential defeats in Kincardine and Deeside, and in Langhaurgh.

Oppositions are ahead in the polls more often than they are behind, and there is no knowing what trouble the European Commission, the Treasury or the health and education lobbyists may not hurl the government's way over the next six months. Mr Major is looking good. Neil Kinnock has had a bruising few weeks. The polls suggest level-pegging. Every campaign is a gamble, but to go now is less of one than waiting through the winter. So Mr Major should go now. He will be damned if he waits until the spring and loses.

The case for not going inverts these arguments. The consistency of the Chancellor's strategy of playing the recession long remains intact, and points to an election postponed as long as possible. Having accepted this strategy in the spring, why abandon it now? Most economic indicators will look better in 1992, notably growth and consumer spending. Labour may have shot its bolt with a leader looking ever more tired. Mr Major's international stature is growing. To go now and lose, when the outlook must be rosier next year, would be the height of folly.

At such times, politicians retreat from ratiocination. They reach down the memoirs of their forebears. They gaze into ever denser entrails: constituency and backbench opinion, stockbrokers' reports, the more obscure political columns. They prick their thumbs. They talk about nothing else, laying off bets to protect their reputations.

The decision facing Mr Major is clear. He should await this week's polls only, take a deep breath, and choose. He should either abandon his party conference and call an election for October, before dark nights and evil by-elections cast a gloom over his chances. Or he should say clearly that there will be no election this year. The present game of cat and mouse will lose him votes.

ALMOST A CHARTER

The government's new Parent's Charter will increase openness in state schools. That is good. The claim from teachers' bodies yesterday that parents will be misled by information on school performance is patently nonsense. At present most parents judge schools by local rumour or hunch, far less reliable than any official league table of curriculum test results.

None the less the document unveiled yesterday by the education secretary, Kenneth Clarke, is not quite like the charters for patients, passengers, public-utility users and the rest, all subsets of the Citizen's Charter which make up John Major's "big idea" for the coming election campaign. The theory is that market forces cannot always be relied upon to improve performance, particularly when the consumer is dealing with a public-sector monopoly provider like the National Health Service or British Rail with considerable institutional rigidity. These charters offer alternative remedies for poor service — ways round hospital waiting lists, compensation for late trains — when simple transfer of custom to a better supplier or provider is not practical.

In place of alternative remedies, Mr Clarke's charter offers information. Parents will be entitled to an annual written report on their child, and to know the relative performances of all local state schools, including their success rates at examination and university entrance, the school budget, truancy rates, procedures for electing school governors, and a summary of reports from school inspectors every four years.

All that helps choice of school. But what are parents of children already in school to do with the information if they do not like what they hear? Such parents cannot use so drastic a measure as removing their child from a school every time they disagree with a teacher — any more than every school can take every child whose parents "choose" to move it there from somewhere else.

Even where parents are lucky enough to get the school they want, this exercise of choice is only real twice, when a child starts at primary school and then at secondary school. Once a child is placed in a school, that school becomes a monopoly supplier. Mr Clarke's invisible hand of the market may indeed gradually raise standards across the board. But there is no remedy here for the one dissatisfied parent whose child is half way through a school. News that an individual child's education is going badly, unless there is something the parent can do about it, will merely compound frustration.

Mr Clarke should have concentrated more on the correction of individual grievances. One route would be to give Her Majesty's Inspectors an ombudsman role, making them directly approachable by parents, just as regulators are open to customer complaints in other industries. The mere knowledge that parents had such rights would produce a better balance of power between teacher and parent. Instead Mr Clarke is moving in the opposite direction, partly privatising the schools' inspectorate and giving a leaner HMI the role of regulating the new private teams. HMI inspections will take place only when a school is clearly in difficulties.

In future governors will have to hire HMI-approved private inspectors every four years to examine their school's performance. Putting summaries of inspections in the hands of parents may well enhance the effectiveness of parental choice in improving schools generally. It will leave one badly treated parent as powerless as ever.

John Major should thank Mr Clarke for his efforts to improve education market forces, but tell him his department's real contribution to the citizen's charter package is still awaited. An aggrieved parent must have somewhere to go — other than to the institution the grievance is about.

SOUNDING THE RETREAT

In his prayer for generosity, St Ignatius Loyola tells those who carry out his spiritual exercises "to toil and not to seek for rest, to labour and not to ask for any reward save that of knowing that we do Thy will". Such selfless devotion to a cause without the promise of success in this life is nowadays not merely rare — as it always was — but seemingly at odds with the ethos of a secular society.

Yet the words of St Ignatius, along with other Christian guides to the inner life, still help many whose days are indeed spent in toil, not for any divine purpose but to sustain their families and realise their ambitions. An increasing number of these, not necessarily churchgoers nor even Christians, are nowadays finding rejuvenation and meaning in their lives in the ancient custom of retreat: a few days of quiet prayer and introspection in a Christian community or retreat house.

Many retreats are supervised by Anglican and Roman Catholic monastic or conventual orders. Others are led by clergy or laymen of various Christian denominations. Demand for places exceeds supply. Some 160 houses offer retreats, and most are booked up in advance throughout the year. For lay persons, the cost may vary between £15 and £30 a day, but some are asked only for donations according to means.

Those who go might find themselves in eminent company — the Archbishop of Canterbury is at present on retreat. There is no social appeal: a normal retreat of eight days

might involve little conversation with anyone. A retreat is scarcely a health farm for body and soul, even if those on retreat may do well to follow the Pope's example by including strenuous physical as well as spiritual exercises in their daily routine. Those on retreat are sometimes coming to terms with a bereavement, a divorce or other crisis. No questions are asked. Nobody qualifies to go on retreat by ostentatious piety.

In these respects, the churches have yet to realise their full potential. To a hyperactive society, the *vita contemplativa* is more attractive than ever. Old prejudices against monks and nuns have given way to awe and to a desire to emulate their inner calm. Yet outside the churches and their press, there is little publicity for retreats. The well-informed will contact the National Retreat Association in London, but to those who lack such contacts the possibility of a retreat is unlikely to occur. If the damage to monastic life in Britain wrought by Henry VIII, only partly repaired by the foundations of the last two centuries, is ever to be undone, the benefits of going on retreat deserve to be proclaimed from every pulpit.

From the ranks of those now on retreat and from their children will come the religious vocations of the future. But the chief beneficiary will not be the churches but society at large. To be at ease with itself a nation cannot do without its retreat.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 071-782 5000

Booker reply on Mosley resignation

From Mr Jeremy Treglown
Sir, No one who has read Martin Amis's *Time's Arrow* or Timothy Mo's *The Redundancy of Courage*, both shortlisted for this year's Booker prize, will take seriously Nicholas Mosley's claim (article, September 26) that the judges are uninterested in ideas. Our argument was about whether the particular "novel of ideas" favoured by Mr Mosley is well written and imaginatively stimulating.

It was also about whether such novels (supposing he is right that they form a separate category from other novels) are the only ones of value. Mr Mosley says he cannot "care deeply" about any of the shortlist. He is missing something. Still he has raised some serious questions, and I will do my best to respond to them at the prizegiving itself on October 22.

Meanwhile, may I comment on his implication that there was something eccentric about the method of selection?

The process was this: the judges — apart from me, all of them novelists — had two long meetings at which we discussed, often in detail, every book for which anyone wanted to make a claim. Some common ground appeared quite quickly; more came later, but by the end there were still powerful differences of opinion between us all.

As chairman I wanted to give weight to individual preferences, while as far as possible reinforcing

such agreement as existed. So the judges were asked, as is quite usual, to list six titles in numerical order of preference, giving six points to their favourite, five to the next, and so on.

To deter compromise the Booker has a good rule (which in the event we did not need to invoke) that no book should be shortlisted without "the full support of at least one judge in whose opinion it is a valid contender for the prize itself". The chairman has a casting vote.

The shortlist consists of the six titles which won the most votes. This has been a strong year and every judge suffered some disappointment. I myself would have liked to see Angela Carter's *Wise Children* and Iain Sinclair's *Downriver* on the list. I sympathise with Nicholas Mosley's regret that none of his own favourites got through. But in a democratic process, it scarcely seems a resignation issue.

Yours faithfully,
JEREMY TREGLOWN,
102 Savernake Road, NW3,
September 26.

From Mr Anthony D. R. Holland
Sir, Is there an inference to be drawn from the fact that none of the novels selected for the Booker shortlist is set in the United Kingdom?

Yours faithfully,
ANTHONY HOLLAND,
Windlesham Manor,
Windlesham, Surrey,
September 25.

The 'pitiful state' of Heveningham Hall

From Mrs David Wheeler

Sir, In 1969 the trustees for my father, Andrew Vaneck, sold Heveningham Hall, Suffolk, to the government of the day and understood, as did we, that the intention was to preserve what was described as "an outstandingly complete unity of 18th-century design".

Last week I visited Heveningham, where I had lived for almost 30 years. My visit was prompted by receipt of a widely circulated and quoted letter from Lady Blatch (minister for the heritage) contending that the state of the house was perfectly acceptable and that credit should be given to the al-Ghazzi family (report, August 16). That is patently not the case.

The house and grounds are in a pitiful state. The secondary rooms have been tastelessly reconstituted as a conference centre with architectural features mutilated or obliterated in many cases. The principal rooms have been picked over and are now in an infinitely worse state than when the government acquired the house.

As for the print room, no serious research could have been undertaken before painting the walls a bilious puce, a colour which does not conform to either my family's collective memory or to contemporary documentation. For Lady Blatch to praise this is astounding. The park and grounds are sad beyond belief, whilst the furniture and contents that have not been vandalised are stored elsewhere, saved in 1985 from further abuse. The remaining chandelier in the saloon is now partially smashed, the other broken into smithereens. The chimney piece of the main dining

room is ripped out, never I suspect to be recovered. Is all this, and more, evidence of the loving care of the owners?

I cannot criticise the government's decision to sell the house; this decision was obviously taken in good faith by the minister concerned. It is subsequent events that must be criticised. Neither do I doubt but that the al-Ghazzi family spent money in abundance on a so-called restoration plan.

I would ask, though, what end does grading and planning serve? Why was it that such fundamental changes to the house were nodded through or condoned by the DoE and English Heritage? Surely the point of planning and listing is not to confuse quantum of money spent with quality of work undertaken?

The government has until December 1 to respond to the receiver's request for clarification as to whether or not it will re-purchase the property. After that date the house will presumably be sold to the highest bidder and all obligations under the covenants imposed by government on the al-Ghazzi family, but sadly not enforced, will disappear.

It is to be hoped that government will now buy back Heveningham and present it to the National Trust who so competently ran it as agents in the 1970s. The house is hardly suitable, as has been proven twice in the last 20 years, to be used as a private residence. Any attempt to follow that route will once again put the property at risk and delay the obvious solution for its future — public ownership.

Yours faithfully,
MARGITA WHEELER,
Broadlands, La Hogue Die,
Grouville, Jersey, CI,
September 25.

Oxfam and politics

From the Director of the International Freedom Foundation
Sir, Mary Cherry of Oxfam (September 26) splits hairs. This foundation has identified what it considers to be over 150 cases of partisan political activity by Oxfam and its affiliates. The vast majority occurring within the UK and thus contrary to British charitable law. Indeed, the Charity Commission upheld our complaints against Oxfam earlier this year, following a 13-month investigation (report, May 10).

To quote directly from the commissioners' press release on that occasion: "The trustees require the trustees [of Oxfam] to accept that some of their current campaigning work is political and not charitable. The unacceptable political activities of the charity must cease."

What can, and should, be concluded from Oxfam (Belgium)'s activities is that they are symptomatic of the decline internationally of a once-respected charity into the quagmire of partisan political activity.

Yours faithfully,
MARC GORDON
(Executive Director),
International Freedom Foundation,
Chesham House,
150 Regent Street, W1,
September 26.

Hero's welcome

From Mr Frank Cope

Sir, Bravo to the RAF for their welcome to Jackie Mann (report, September 26). What a joy to us all.

On Terry Waite's arrival, may we hope that he is welcomed by our church bells throughout the land. If a few hooters join in, so much the better.

Yours faithfully,
FRANK COPE,
76 Raleigh Drive,
Whitstone, N20,
September 26.

Letters to the editor should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — (071 782 5046).

Control of South African broadcasting

From Mr Mendi Msimang

Sir, The denial by Christo Viljoen, chairman of the Board of Control of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, of state control of South African television (September 25) would be laughable were it not fraught with dire consequences for the vast majority of voiceless South Africans.

Soon after the release of Nelson Mandela last year, there were calls for the democratisation of broadcasting. The government answered by appointing a "task group" headed by this same Christo Viljoen. No representative of independent media bodies or of the African National Congress were part of this group.

The group's report argues the need to depoliticise broadcasting by passing control to the Independent Broadcasting Authority — a body which we regard as anything but independent. All five of its members, including Viljoen, are appointed to a five-year term by the South African president. The task group's recommendations would leave them in power until 1997 — probably three years into the first term of a post-apartheid government. The report has left most observers as cynical as ever.

In this period of transition, when all the different voices have to be heard if South Africa is going to make a break with its destructive past, the SABC has to be restructured within the context of an interim governing authority.

This is an urgent matter since nine million South Africans are illiterate and broadcasting is a powerful medium of influence. Unless checked and put in responsible hands, the determination of the

majority of our people to create a free and democratic society will continue being thwarted by a cabal of insensitive mandarins.

Yours sincerely,
MENDI MSIMANG
(Chief Representative,
ANC Mission, UK and Ireland),
PO Box 38, 28 Penton Street, N1,
September 25.

From Dr C. F. Forsyth
Sir, Mr H. Christo Viljoen asserts that the South African Broadcasting Service is no more "state-controlled" than the BBC. In my view, any fair-minded study of the SABC during the apartheid years would conclude that the body was cravenly subservient to the South African government.

To give but one example: in early September 1987 (the incident was documented in your columns on September 16, 1987) the then president, P. W. Botha, was angered that insufficient prominence had been given to his views in the evening television news bulletin. He intervened, by telephone, and before the end of the offending bulletin, the SABC broadcast a lengthy "correction" giving the president's views at great length. Whatever criticisms one may have of the BBC, it has not sunk that low.

If Mr Viljoen wishes to create a proper independent broadcasting service in South Africa he should address himself to that task, for there is much to be done. But writing to you in an attempt to defend the indefensible is not the way to achieve that end.

Yours faithfully,
C. F. FORSYTH,
Robinson College, Cambridge,
September 25.

Political gap

From Mr P. J. Windibank

Sir, How can Ivor Crewe ("How much do leaders matter?", September 19) join far too many other commentators and write that "the ideological gap between the Conservatives and Labour has never been narrower"? The gap is wide and, if nothing else, ideological.

Conservative economics concentrate resources into the financial community, whereas Labour would place the emphasis on reviving and developing industry. Conservative taxation policies aim at reducing direct taxation — particularly for those who can best afford to pay — starving public services and the national infrastructure, while Labour's aim is to rationalise it and maintain the public sector properly.

Executives' salaries

From Mr Raymond Durrant

Sir, The salary of the part-time chairman of the recently privatised company, Scottish Hydro-Electric, has been tripled to an annual sum of £150,000 and other executives with the company have also received very substantial increases (Business, September 20).

The chairman, Sir Michael Joughin, is quoted as saying: "They have got to be paid what they can get elsewhere."

If this is correct, one is prompted to ask why the executives and others now seemingly able to command the new salaries had ever been prepared to take the posts at their pre-privatisation levels of remuneration and why they had not "gone elsewhere" many years beforehand, as opposed to waiting for their post-privatisation salary increases?

It would seem logical that the posts should now be re-advised to see whether men and women of an even higher calibre than the existing incumbents could now be attracted by the newly-introduced financial emoluments.

Yours faithfully,
RAYMOND DURRANT,
195 Marshalls Lane,
St Albans, Hertfordshire.

A sartorial hitch

From Mr Robin Stieber

Sir, I sympathise with Mr Major (Diary, September 25) in his trouser predicament. The blame for his sartorial laxity lies with the nation's gentlemen's outfitters, who seem en masse to have replaced the neat, secure and hidden hook which used to fasten the tops of our trousers with an unsightly flap held by an exposed button. This is quite likely to work loose and fall, even on prime ministerial trousers.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN STIEBER,
89 Langthorne Street, SW6,
September 27.

From Mr W. N. Ramsbottom

Sir, On a recent holiday in Beadnell, Northumberland, I sighted a Trabant along with thousands of terns, cormorants, kittiwakes, gulls, mottos and shags.

The unusual feature was the national identification plate. The first "D" and the "R" had been erased leaving a central, solitary "D".

Yours faithfully,
W. N. RAMSBOTTOM,
8 Bridge Green,
Prestbury, Cheshire,
September 23.

From Mr Richard Fearn

Sir, My sighting of an East German registered Trabant occurred last summer at Chesters Roman fort on Hadrian's Wall in Northumberland. This raises the question of whether these vehicles have a natural affinity

The Conservative drive is to centralise power in matters such as local government and education, compared with Labour's arguments for greater autonomy for local communities. The Conservatives are grudging about all things European, whereas Labour favours closer involvement — the list goes on.

That Labour and the Conservatives (happily) are both less extreme than hitherto provides no argument for saying that there is little to choose between them, nor for hunting at the unspoken corollary that this is sufficient reason for staying with an ideology that has informed the governance of this country for more than a decade.

Yours faithfully,
PETER WINDIBANK,
74 The Lane, Blackheath Park, SE3,
September 20.

Stranded children

From Mrs Anthony Riddle

Sir, I am sorry that Mr Ian Botham's son (letter, September 27) and other children (report, September 24) should have had such an unnerving time, courtesy of British Rail. My 14-year-old son's experience was very different.

In July he forgot to change at Doncaster whilst travelling from York to Sheffield. He telephoned home from the InterCity train, having ascertained that he could get off at Newark and catch a train back via Doncaster.

I telephoned Newark, where the station manager kindly put him on the correct train. I also phoned Doncaster to explain that my son had no money and was told that there would be no problem. There wasn't. I didn't have to pay anything.

Yours faithfully,
KATHRYN RIDDLE,
9 Rammoor Crescent,
Sheffield, South Yorkshire,
September 27.

Shifting the load

From Mr Bob Ransford

Sir, If it is true, as Stephen Haydon of the CBI asserts (September 26), that the inadequacy of London's transport is already costing businesses £10,000 million a year and that the cost will increase, then it would be a wise investment, and fair to the taxpayer elsewhere, if those same businesses that have helped to create the congestion by crowding into one small corner of the country decided to contribute the more than £100 million to make up the sum Network SouthEast says (report, September 20) is needed for providing a remedy.

Yours sincerely,
BOB RANSFORD,
Tusany, Great Waddingfield,
Suffolk,
September 26.

For decrepit walls left behind by decadent empires?
Yours faithfully,
RICHARD FEARN,
Flat 4a, 28 Sutherland Avenue, W9.

From Mr N. C. F. Barber

Sir, I spotted a Trabant in Wester Ross, Highland, last year, heading north (noisily). Is it possible that this sputtering bird finally migrated home and has returned this year, with some young, to be sighted by Mr Hawkins whose letter you published on September 20? Should they not be caught and ringed in readiness for the 1992 season?

Yours faithfully,
NICHOLAS BARBER,
Burners Cottage, Rowley Lane,
Wexham, Buckinghamshire.

Weekend Money letters, page 28
Sports letters, page 35



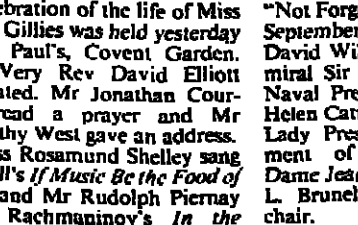
KENSINGTON PALACE
September 27: The Prince of Wales received the Right Hon Lynda Chalker, MP (Minister for Overseas Development).
The Princess of Wales arrived at Gatwick Airport, London this afternoon from Pakistan.

Royal College of Radiologists
Dr R.K. Levick delivered the George Simon lecture at the annual scientific meeting of the Royal College of Radiologists held yesterday at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, Dublin.

ROY FULLER

Members at large: Mr. David Laidlaw (Glenfinnan), Mr. John MacKenzie (Michael Dargy (Northern Venture Management)), Mr. Tony Lyons (Buchanan Communications), Mr. Bill Eldridge (Barclays Bank), Mr. M R Cumming (Glenfinnan Development), Mr. Ian Burns (Glenfinnan Development Capital), Mr. C Macintyre (Midland Montagu Ventures), Mr. Roger Huxford and Mr. Richard Cutler (County Scotland), Mr. A. J. Macdonald (International Westminster Bank, Louthbury).

Mr. Jim Hudson (Glenfinnan Bank of Scotland), Mr. Christopher Swales (representing the British Overseas Bank of Scotland), Mr. Ian Simpson



as Colonel Devon and will present to the 4th Arm Barracks. Kent will's Trophy at Festival. As

Reception

"Not Forgotten" Association on September 24. Admiral Sir David Williams succeeded Admiral Sir Desmond Dreyer as Naval President and Brigadier Helen Cattanach was appointed President on the retirement of Air Commandant Dame Jean Conan Doyle. Mr. J. Brunel Cohen was in the chair.

Norman Anderson, QC, former director. Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. London University. 83: Signor Michelangelo Antonioni. film director. 79: Air Marshal Sir David Atkinson. 67: Lord Avebury. 63: Lord Justice Balcombe. 66: Mr Richard Bonyng. conductor. 61: Mr Chris Broad. cricketer. 34: Mr Sebastian Coe. athlete. 35: Mr

Reception

Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors

Mr Ted Watts, President of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, was host at a reception held yesterday at 12 Great George Street for new Fellows from other EC countries.

Members of staff: Mr David Jackson (National Investment Board, Mr Michael Denno (Northern Venture Capital), Mr Tony Brown (Suchan Communications), Mr Bill Edwards (Barclays Bank), Mr M R Cummings (Barclays Development Capital), Ian Burns (Lloyds Development Capital), Mr C Masterson (Midland Montagu Ventures), Mr Roger Hughes and Mr Richard Cutler (Comau NatWest), Mr B Featherstone (National Westminster Bank, Lothburn).

Mr Jim Hudson (Royal Bank of Scotland), Mr Christopher Powell (representing the senior management of Bank of Scotland), Mr Ian Simpson

The Duke of Kent, as Colonel-in-Chief of the Devon and Dorset Regiment, will present the new Colours to the 4th Battalion at Wyvern Barracks, Exeter, at 10.20.

The Duchess of Kent will present The Queen's Trophy to the Brent Walker Festival, A.C.O. at noon.

Norman Anderson, QC, former director. Institute of Advanced Legal Studies. London University. 83: Signor Michelangelo Antonioni. film director. 79: Air Marshal Sir David Atkinson. 67: Lord Avebury. 63: Lord Justice Balcombe. 66: Mr Richard Bonyng. conductor. 61: Mr Chris Broad. cricketer. 34: Mr Sebastian Coe. athlete. 35: Mr

Reception

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000 News 5.15 The Village (r) **12.43 World Service (LW only)**

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World business news 1.30 Letter from America 12.30 1.5 5.05 6 World 1.00 Newsdesk 1.30 1. Previews of Arts 2.00 News 2.01 The Sex Ties 2.45 English Songwriters 5.0 Newsdesk 3.30 Composer of the Month: Antonin Dvorak 4.00 News 4.05 News About Britain 4.15 Sports Roundup 4.30 Anything Goes 5.00 Newsdesk

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● BUSINESS AND FINANCE 19-22
● WEEKEND MONEY 23-30
● SPORT 31-36

WEEKEND
MONEY

Ferranti losses

Eugene Anderson, the chairman of Ferranti, has told shareholders that he has worked for nothing since arriving to rescue the electronics group last year. He has suffered a £300,000 loss on his shares in the company, which has effectively wiped out his salary in the period. Mr Anderson told Ferranti's annual meeting that the group would continue to make losses in the current year, and is selling its mislabeled business to GEC to settle a £50 million dispute with the group. Page 21



Roger Seelig, the merchant banker accused of taking part in a multi-million pound share support operation, told an enquiry he was involved in a "loose, back-scratching arrangement", the second Guinness trial heard. Page 21

No rates cap

Legislation proposed by the OFT to crack down on illegal money lenders will not attempt to outlaw loans charging interest rates of 100 per cent or more. Page 23

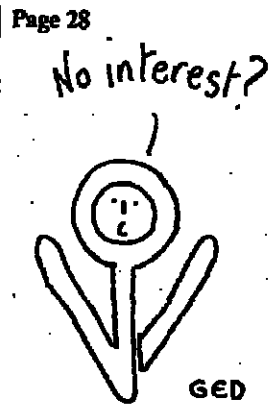
Home claims

Life companies have paid £8.3 million this year to elderly investors who were persuaded by salesmen to take out home investment income plans. Page 24

Bonus offer

Bonuses are being offered to with-profits policyholders of Scottish Mutual if they sanction a takeover by Abbey National. Page 27

Letters



In the credit card war, Peter West advocates use of the Oxfam Visa card, which carries no annual charge and 60 days credit on purchases. Page 28

Joint venture

NatWest Life, National Westminster Bank's £150 million venture with Clerical Medical, will see an end to the bank's independent adviser status. Pages 21, 23

Adwest suffers

Adwest Group is pegging its dividend for the year at 7p after suffering a 43 per cent fall in pre-tax profits to £7.1 million for the year to end-June. Page 22

Kettle resigns

Roy Kettle has quit as executive director of Evered Bardon, where interim pre-tax profits fell to £10.3 million. Page 22



Jean Walker, wife of George Walker, the ousted chief executive of Brent Walker, has been re-elected to the group's board. Writs on behalf of Mrs Walker and the couple's son Jason have been served on the company. Page 20

Deadline near

Holders of electricity shares will receive letters next week telling them they have until 3pm on October 22 to pay the second instalment for their shares. Page 24

Bargain hunters

Bradford & Bingley turned away thousands seeking information on buying a repossessed property with a mortgage rate pegged at 6.99 per cent for two years. Page 25

Rate reduced

Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society has cut the interest on its five-year fixed rate mortgage to 10.2 per cent. Page 25

Bigger impact

Signs of a possible end to the recession have brought new optimism for the smaller companies sector, which, after spending two years in the doldrums, is tipped for a significant recovery. Investors with large sums of money on deposit in banks and building societies are being advised to switch part of those assets into a unit trust investing in the smaller companies sector. Page 26

WEEK ENDING
Matthew Bond

This sporting life

Hugh Hudson, the veteran film director, is already working on a new film project. Fresh from his triumph with Neil Kinnock, City advisers are hoping that the distinguished director can do the same to restore the tarnished reputation of Sir Roland Smith, the ubiquitous company professor who this week reluctantly parted company with British Aerospace. Sir Roland, a bluff Mancunian, is expected to warm to the *cinéma vérité* of Mr Hudson, whose response to criticism that Mr Kinnock was a loquacious Welshman was to make a film that proved conclusively that the Opposition leader was Welsh and talked a lot. An early draft of what Mr Hudson has in mind has dropped on to the Week Ending desk. It opens with an early morning long shot of Old Trafford, the mist rising slowly above the hallowed turf of the ground that is home to Sir Roland's beloved Manchester United. While the



camera zooms in slowly, a ghostly choir of unseen supporters begins the ritual chant: "United... United..." before breaking into a rousing chorus of "You'll never work alone." As the camera begins a jinking run down the left wing, Kenneth Wolstenholme's commentary rises above the crowd. "Smith... to Arlington... back to Smith... to Ordinance..." As the goalmouth nears, the noise swells. "Some shareholders are on the pitch. The institutions think it's all over. Smith... Day... Smith. It is now!" As the ball thuds into the net the crowd roars. Smith wins 432-0. We cut to Sir Roland's Manchester home. Our hero's day is beginning. Having shaved over his Hepworth Holdings sink, Sir Roland is enjoying a quiet mug of tea in the now somewhat faded elegance of his Mobern kitchen. Off stage we hear the clatter of the letter-box. Sir Roland checks his calendar. It is the last Thursday of the month. Pay day.

The action freezes as the haunting theme from *Charlies of Fire* begins. The years roll away as Sir Roland relives his glorious university career (Manchester, not Cambridge). In lingering slow motion, the camera tracks his spirit out of the kitchen and along the hall. With sines straining and veins pulsing, he makes the well practised final dip for the 11 cheques that lie on the Redcut carpet. Fade again to the Old Trafford roar of approval.

Cut to the business day. Striding purposefully from his front door, Sir Roland glances proudly at the now rusting hulk of the burned-out tank that still decorates his front lawn. As he reaches the gate, 11 chauffeurs clamour for his attention. He picks one and the maelstrom begins. Meeting after meeting, office after office, drafting this, faxing that, hiring here and firing there.

But even Sir Roland must relax. The final scene sees him at a Christmas party. Glancing across the room he catches the eye of Lord Young, who as chairman of Cable and Wireless cuts a more affluent figure than he did in his days at the trade department. "Ah David, just the lad I wanted to see. I don't suppose you want to buy a football club?" As Lord Young smiles and reaches out again for his cheque book, the terrace chair returns with a final stirring reprieve: "Work on... work on... with hope..."

BUSINESS PROFILE: Lord Swaythling

From aristocrat to meritocrat

Gillian Bowditch finds David Montagu, the chairman of Rothmans International, a man of business not family

David Montagu, the fourth Lord Swaythling, sits in his elegant Mayfair office and puffs on a cigar of Churchillian proportions. A member of the Samuel Montagu banking family, he exudes the confidence that comes from inherited wealth, an Eton education and the knowledge that, despite a fortunate start in life, he has carved his own niche. As chairman of Rothmans International, the tobacco group that has stakes in Alfred Dunhill and Cartier, the jeweller, he has a taste for the finer things in life. He has built up an excellent cellar, has an eye for art and owns a string of racehorses. He is civilised, with a dislike of the vulgar. On paper, he is a perfect product of the establishment, but in reality, his outspokenness has led to clashes with the great and the good. Christopher Chataway, chairman of Crown Communications and a former colleague of Lord Swaythling, says: "He has got to where he is entirely on his own merits. He has always said exactly what he thinks and, in the process, has alienated a number of powerful and influential people. He has a lot of establishment friends but he also has enemies and he hasn't chosen them very carefully."

Lord Swaythling is proud of his family name, his Anglo-Jewish heritage, and his achievements as a banker. His friends testify to his warmth, generosity and loyalty, although they say he never compromises on a matter of principle, and has a biting, acerbic wit.

John Freeman, the former chairman of London Weekend Television, says: "He is remarkably generous. I don't just mean giving away money, but he understands people's problems and goes to some lengths to help. He espouses a cause and then fights very hard. He is someone I trust entirely. He is a man with whom I would go tiger shooting."

Lady Swaythling, who is French, says her husband has "a great deal of vision" and is not afraid of being controversial. "He's observant, he notices little things, which Englishmen, on the whole, tend not to do, and he loves comfortable living."

Despite joining the family bank straight from Cambridge, Lord Swaythling's career has had its peaks and troughs. He says: "No-one has a smooth career. It's like saying you never have a quarrel with your wife. It just isn't true. Mine has been a difficult career." Nepotism is something he cannot be accused of. Samuel Montagu may have been founded by his great-grandfather, but by the time Lord Swaythling joined the bank, there were no other Montagus in high office. His father had

joined the bank out of a sense of duty but was more interested in dairy farming. "I was taken on very much on sufferance by the then proprietors," says Lord Swaythling. "I joined it because I thought I'd like to see another Montagu at the top of Samuel Montagu. My father had not been a successful banker and I wanted to prove that my family could still run a bank." He achieved his ambition, becoming chairman of Montagu at the age of 41. Although his name helped, it was a genuine meritocracy and his skill as a banker is well known. Lord King, chairman of British Airways, says: "He is an extremely able banker. One is very relaxed doing business with him. He's an attractive man with good ideas. He's very tenacious."

Lord Swaythling left Samuel Montagu in 1973, after it was taken over by Midland Bank, a deal he oversaw but did not approve of. He was asked to be non-executive chairman. "A 'He espouses a cause and then fights very hard. He is someone I trust entirely. He is a man with whom I would go tiger shooting' greater insult has never been offered to anyone in their early forties, to be non-executive chairman of a business you've run."

Instead, he went to run Orion Bank, a loss-making consortium bank owned by six large international banks. Within six years, he had turned the business around but by 1979 the future for consortium banks was not rosy. He told the shareholders that one of them must buy the bank or they must sell the bank to a third party. "I told them it was a very expensive form of dining club," says Lord Swaythling.

The result was that he left with a £120,000 payoff. Within 18 months, however, Royal Bank of Canada, one of the six shareholders, had bought Orion. An unsuccessful year with Merrill Lynch followed before Lord Swaythling joined his old friend, Jacob Rothschild, as deputy chairman of J Rothschild Holdings. Lord Swaythling has long had a number of non-executive posts. He was on the board of LWT for 21 years, having been

involved in its formation. He is a director of the *Daily Telegraph* and spent 16 years on the investment committee of the United Nations. When he was asked to be deputy chairman and chairman-elect of Rothmans, whose board he had sat on for 20 years, he agreed. He seems at home at Rothmans, from where he has taken on the anti-smoking lobby. "Tobacco is one of the best businesses in the world," he says. "The fact is that just under a third of the world's population smokes. It's absurd that the EEC talks about total bans on advertising. Tobacco is legal and this country gets a very substantial percentage of its revenue from the industry. He does not return to homes where smoking is banned."

Lord Swaythling met his wife, Ninette, in Paris in April 1951, and married eight months later. He says she is a great source of support, playing down problems that he is inclined to dramatise. He inherited the title when his father, the third Lord Swaythling, died last year, aged 91. The relationship between father and son had never been close. His parents divorced during the second world war and he lived with his mother and stepfather. He was sent to Eton after a spell in Bermuda, to where he had been evacuated during the war, but it was not until Cambridge that he made lasting friendships.

He signed up to read law, but the books looked too dull, so he switched to English literature, with the words of his uncle ringing in his ears: "There is only one reason for going to an English university and that is to learn how to get drunk like a gentleman." He did that, but also developed an interest in politics. He was later an adviser to Edward Heath on taxation and economic policy, but now describes himself as a Tory wet. One of his few regrets is that he did not make a career in politics. His friends are divided on that point. All agree that he is a marvellous speaker, but John Freeman says: "He's too fastidious and too discriminating to make a good politician." His wife says he is not thick skinned enough.

He has a seat in the House of Lords although rarely finds time to attend debates. He chose to make his maiden speech in favour of the war crimes bill, saying he did not want Britain to be "a safe haven for people who had committed the most horrendous crimes. I don't want these pathetic old men brought into court and I don't want revenge but I do want them to feel a slight friction in their hearts when the postman knocks." He describes himself as a "lobster-eating Jew. I



Proud of the Montagu family name: Lord and Lady Swaythling at their home in London

don't believe in the mumbo jumbo of religion but I think it's a tremendous help if you have got faith. I wish I had it and I wish I had imbued my children with it." Lord Swaythling has two children, Charles, aged 37, who is in advertising, and Nicole, 35, who is married to a barrister. His oldest daughter, Fiona, died when she was 29. "I think you have a choice in life of pursuing a career or being a family person. You don't have time for both. I'm not proud of the fact that I'm not a very family-minded person. Of course, I'm proud of my family and I love my family, but I've been selfish over the years."

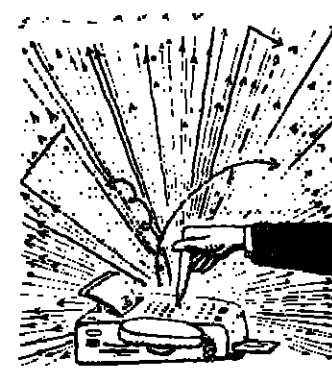
Lord Swaythling is 63 years old but has no plans to retire. He is keen on golf and plays bridge and billiards enthusiastically. The theatre has been a life-long love and he has ambitions to write a book of anecdotal memoirs and also one on the City. He says: "I've had a happy and an interesting life, but I've had quite a lot of downs as well as ups. I think if I could start again, I may well have gone the route of the law and politics through the law, but that's based on a great deal of hindsight. I have no regrets but I think I'm honest enough to say I would do it differently if I had to do it again."

C&W spells the end for Faxman

By NICK NUTTALL
TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

IN A move that is likely to elicit sighs of relief and a lowering of blood pressures at companies across the country, Cable and Wireless has launched SureFax, the first globally managed fax service able to send messages to thousands of addresses worldwide in minutes. The system is likely to trigger mutterings of concern at international courier companies, and spell the end of some of the more arcane practices linked with the humble task of sending faxes. These include the curious activity, found among multinational companies now, of

deploying legions of staff behind batteries of fax machines in an attempt to meet deadlines. While most people are happily tucked up in bed taking a last look at *The Times*, these tenacious employees are labouring into the wee hours, while outside, with meters running, taxis hired to take them home pile on the penalties. Given the technology's enthusiasm for jamming and stalling in mid-flow, large sections of the workforce would appear to be ineffectually employed. Studies, undertaken by Mercury Communications, C&W's partner, indicate that the average large company chaperones 5,000 faxes of 2.3 pages in length each week. Jane Davies, SureFax prod-



uct manager, said: "Based on these figures, we calculate that 24 man-days each week are being spent standing looking at fax machines." With SureFax, companies set up a fax list as long as

they like, for a one-off £200, that can be simply amended. A special socket, rented for £1.50, allows the service to recognise the fax sender and list. The fax is then sent to a central switch by dialling a special number, instantly "exploding" to all its destinations. Ms Davies said the service will automatically redial busy fax machines and recognise if a fax fails half way through. The service will redial, sending the missing pages and a cover note. Costs are 13 per cent less than for British Telecom and a few per cent more than for Mercury. Meanwhile, fax machines continue to multiply. In 1985, there were 100,000 in Britain. By 1995, two million are forecast.

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THE POUND

US dollar 1.7355 (same)
German mark 2.9156 (+0.0026)
Exchange index 91.0 (+0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)

STOCK MARKET

FT 30 share 218.9 (-6.3)
FT-SE 100 2589.0 (+3.4)
New York Dow Jones 3023.48 (+6.26)
Tokyo Nikkei Ave 23969.47 (+1.39)

INTEREST RATES

London Bank Base 10.75%
3-month interbank 10.75-10.76%
3-month eligible bills 9.75-9.76%
US Prime Rate 6.50%
Federal Funds 5.75%
3-month Treasury Bill 5.14-5.15%
30-year bonds 10.25-10.26%

CURRENCIES

London: New York \$1.7355
Paris 166.25
Frankfurt 1.7355
Tokyo 239.69
Hong Kong 7.75
Singapore 1.36
Switzerland 1.48
Italy 1.36
Spain 1.66
Greece 1.36
Japan 166.25
Australia 1.54
Canada 1.36
New Zealand 1.36
South Africa 1.36
Brazil 1.36
Argentina 1.36
Chile 1.36
Colombia 1.36
Costa Rica 1.36
Cuba 1.36
Czech Republic 1.36
Denmark 1.36
Ecuador 1.36
Egypt 1.36
Finland 1.36
France 1.36
Germany 1.36
Ghana 1.36
Greece 1.36
Guatemala 1.36
Honduras 1.36
Hungary 1.36
India 1.36
Indonesia 1.36
Israel 1.36
Italy 1.36
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Kuwait 1.36
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Puerto Rico 1.36
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Thailand 1.36
Togo 1.36
Tonga 1.36
Trinidad and Tobago 1.36
Tunisia 1.36
Turkey 1.36
Uganda 1.36
Ukraine 1.36
United Kingdom 1.36
United States 1.36
Uruguay 1.36
Venezuela 1.36
Vietnam 1.36
Yemen 1.36
Zambia 1.36
Zimbabwe 1.36

GOLD

London Fixing: AM \$348.40 pm \$348.45
Close \$348.25-348.75 (2200.60)
201.40
New York: COMEX \$348.45-348.55

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent (Oct) \$21.35 bbl (\$21.15)

RETAIL PRICES

RPI: 194.1 August (1987=100)
Denotes midday trading price

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:
Allied Lyons 689p (+14p)
Harland Simon 677p (+15p)
Fomster 446p (+11p)
Boosey & Hawkes 765p (+10p)
Crested Corn 654p (+11p)
Central TV 357p (+13p)
Preston 314p (+13p)
Aim 180p (+15p)
Vickers 172p (+20p)
FALLS:
Dr Aerospace 412p (-15p)
D Smith 347p (-21p)
Barnes Control 527p (-9p)
Reuter 357p (-12p)
Rutnam Group 115p (-10p)
PNC 104p (-9p)
Powell Duffryn 302p (-32p)

Williams pays \$60m for Rockwell branch

WILLIAMS Holdings, the industrial conglomerate now in the process of a contested \$701 million bid for Rascal Electronics, has agreed to buy the American fire protection division of America's Rockwell International Corporation for \$60 million cash.

The businesses, trading under the name Fireye, had a pro forma turnover of \$28.4 million and pro forma operating profits of \$9.6 million in the year to end-September. Fireye has plants in New Hampshire and Puerto Rico, and will be integrated into Williams' fire and safety international division. The deal is conditional only on the receipt of government approval.

Olivetti in £33.5m loss

OLIVETTI, the Italian computer maker, announced a pre-tax loss of £7.7 billion (£33.5 million) during the first half of this year, compared with a profit of £1.6 billion during the same period of 1990. Carlo De Benedetti, chairman, said the company was still in better financial shape than most of its European competitors, which had all suffered from the downturn in the industry.

Poster group pegs payout

MORE O'Ferrall, the outdoor poster contractor, is maintaining its interim dividend at 3.2p, despite a fall in pre-tax profits to £812,000 in the six months to end-June, against £1.98 million last time. Earnings per share decline to 2.1p, down from 5.2p previously. Turnover was £27.9 million (£27.6 million). Full-year profits are not expected to match last year's level. The shares lost 5p to 276p.

Panfida to refinance

PANFIDA Group, the Australian retailer operating the Martin chain of newsagents, is finalising a refinancing arrangement, one effect of which will be to eliminate £49 million of outstanding debt and accrued interest.

On completion of the arrangements involving holders of the company's convertible notes, News International will have 26 per cent of Panfida and Elders Finance 23 per cent. Panfida will change its name to Martin Retail Group and its financial year to April 30. Panfida shares traded at 6p yesterday.

Triton assets raise £34.9m

TRITON Europe earned net income of £31.4 million in the year to end-May. Helped by the sale of its North Sea assets, the disposal to Conoco in June realised exceptional income of £34.9 million, including a profit of £24.2 million and foreign exchange gains of £10.7 million realised on repayment of borrowings. There is no final dividend, making 7p for the year (nil), including an extraordinary 6p payout.

Wiggins cuts its losses

WIGGINS Group, the housebuilder and developer, has reported a pre-tax loss of £2.5 million for the year to end-March, compared with a loss of £13.7 million the year before. The reduced losses follow a refinancing of the company's debt that was completed during the year. As a result, the net interest charge has fallen from £4.9 million to £1.7 million. For the second year, there is no dividend.

Clayform cuts debt

CLAYFORM, the property and retailing company, has cut its debt from £108 million to £77 million in the six months to end-June as it works towards matching interest and overhead charges with rental and retail income. The company's pre-tax and pre-exceptional losses were £5.8 million, compared with losses of £3.6 million in the first half of 1990. However, at the pre-tax level, losses declined from £9.9 million to £6.6 million, as exceptional losses dropped from £6.3 million in 1990 to £800,000. There is no interim dividend (2p).

Missiles business being sold to GEC in settlement of £50m dispute

Ferranti warns shareholders of more losses

By NEIL BENNETT

FERRANTI, the stricken electronics group, has warned shareholders that it will continue to suffer losses this year, and that the group's survival depends on the settlement of the legal disputes.

Eugene Anderson, the chairman, told the annual meeting it was clear that the group would not be in profit for the half year to September, and that a profit in the year to end-March would be "highly unlikely". This follows last year's £98 million loss.

He confirmed that the group is in final negotiations to sell its missile business to GEC as a settlement of a £50 million dispute. The dispute surrounds the asset value of Ferranti's defence systems subsidiary, which it sold to GEC in March last year.

The deal, if concluded, will free Ferranti from its largest order, worth more than £300 million, to supply air-launched missiles to the United Arab Emirates. The disposal will reduce the group's net liabilities by an estimated £150 million, and provide the group with cash.

Mr Anderson, who joined the group after the discovery of a £21.5 million fraud at its International Signal and Control subsidiary, told the meeting that work on contract had drained the group of £50 million in the past year.

Ferranti is also negotiating a legal dispute at Ferranti International Controls Corporation in America, where two of its main customers have cancelled contracts and are claiming £21 million plus unspecified damages.

Mr Anderson said that the company's turnover would reach £350 million this year, more than £100 million lower than previously. Much of this

work, he said, would be loss-making.

He said: "The company has an order book approaching £500 million. Many of these contracts are not profitable and were probably not so on the day they were signed."

Ferranti is suffering a cash flow crisis, and Mr Anderson revealed that the company was still unable to pay its suppliers on time. The group has overdue trade debts of more than £30 million, although the sum is falling. "Performance in the current year has been affected by our liquidity problems. This has led to problems of supply which have impacted on output," he said.

Ferranti is in talks with its bankers over breaches in its leading agreements. They have given the company until November 3 to reach a solution.

He said: "Given continued progress on our asset disposals programme, I believe further banking support will be forthcoming."

Since Mr Anderson joined in February last year, net liabilities have fallen from £700 million to £330 million. He said that the group is also negotiating to sell the rest of

the Marquadt business, which will reduce debts further.

Despite these problems, the group has taken orders worth £127 million this year, and announced that it has won the contract to supply the information systems for the new Manchester Airport.

Mr Anderson faced a series of protests from shareholders at the meeting about the creation of a new share option scheme. He told shareholders he has been working for nothing since he joined the company. He has suffered an estimated loss of £300,000 on his £12,000 shares, equivalent to his total salary in the past 18 months. His original share options are fixed at 35p, compared with a current share price of 10p, and are worthless.

A shareholder complained that a swarm of corporate locusts was draining Ferranti and other companies of resources. "We do not have locusts, but worker bees," replied Mr Anderson. "If it were not for them, this could be a very different type of meeting. I sincerely hope that you will support the company and the board, and when we come to meet in a year's time, we will have a more satisfactory story to tell you."

NatWest link ends independent status

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

NATIONAL Westminster Bank is to form a life assurance company in a joint venture with Clerical Medical and will abandon its independent adviser status. The new company will be capitalised at £150 million and 92.5 per cent owned by NatWest.

NatWest Life will begin underwriting business in just over a year's time. After the launch, the bank's 3,000 branches will be able to sell the products of the new company only. Currently, the bank can sell the products of all investment groups through its branches. It will offer independent advice only through a separate subsidiary within the new company begins trading.

NatWest is the largest independent adviser, with branches in most high streets. When NatWest Life is launched, however, the Bradford & Bingley Building Society will assume this position with its 300 branches. Until a year ago, NatWest - which was the only one of the big four banks to opt for independent status under the

Comment, page 23



Joining up: Derek Wanless (left) and Roger Corley

Astra attempts to make its peace

By JONATHAN PRYNN

ASTRA Holdings, the controversial fireworks and munitions company, is hoping to give its tarnished image a green tinge by diversifying into the more environmentally acceptable field of energy conservation.

The company will also improve its image with a sword-into-ploughshares programme of converting its defence manufacturing business to civilian use.

The plan marks the latest stage in the remarkable survival story of a business that has suffered one of the worst public images of any quoted company in recent years. As well as massive losses and a devastated balance sheet, Astra has been bedevilled by adverse publicity resulting from a former subsidiary's involvement in the Iraqi supergun affair. "This is a company few people gave much hope of survival to a year ago," said Tony

Wembley profit slumps by £14.8m

By MATTHEW BOND

PRE-TAX profits at Wembley, the company that owns and operates Wembley stadium and arena, slumped to £709,000 in the six months to end-June, compared with £15.5 million.

The fall in profits is exaggerated by more than £10 million of property and other exceptional profits that were included in the 1990 figures. But even with these stripped out, pre-exceptional profits have fallen by 85 per cent.

Wembley's interest charge has jumped by a third to £9 million, reflecting the full carrying cost of the five American greyhound tracks Wembley acquired for £57.8 million at the end of 1989.

These higher interest charges have coincided with a trading period in which the Gull, a dented number of American musicians and bands from embarking on the sort of big concert tour that Wembley relies on to boost stadium and arena revenue. At the same time expansion work on the conference centre reduced the number of exhibitions held and the level of trading profits.

Sir Brian Wolfson is optimistic that these adverse factors will prove one-offs. "The short-term outlook shows little sign of improvement in 1991 but, looking forward to 1992, there is strong evidence signifying a substantial upturn in performance," he said.

Sir Brian added that the group's major capital expenditure programme has largely been completed, leaving Wembley with a number of leisure facilities of outstanding quality. The recent acquisition from the receiver of the Keith Prowse ticketing and hospitality businesses should bring significant economies of scale to the company's existing operations.

The interim dividend has been maintained at 0.9p.

ITV firms 'being pushed to margins'

By MELINDA WITTSTOCK, MEDIA CORRESPONDENT

OWNERSHIP restrictions are threatening to reduce the UK's independent television companies to the margins of an increasingly global media industry, Central Television said yesterday.

Current restraints were preventing ITV companies from acquiring continental broadcasters or from growing to "a reasonable size" in the UK, the company said.

Central, unopposed in the ITV licence auction with a bid reported to be as low as £2,000 a year, is seen as a likely target for a large European media conglomerate once the moratorium on takeovers expires at the beginning of 1994.

Leslie Hill, Central's chief executive, said: "Broadcasting legislation and regulation in Britain and the rest of Europe is not even-handed. While it is possible for EC-registered interests to own and

control British television companies, national regulations prevent us from achieving a similar position in most European countries."

Mr Hill said this European anomaly was aggravated by UK cross-media ownership rules, which prevented the nine largest ITV companies from owning more than 20 per cent of each other.

Mr Hill blamed the drop in Central's interim profits, which halved to £3.4 million, on a "punitive" exchequer levy, which together with tax accounted for 80 per cent of profits.

Turnover was down just 9 per cent to £139.7 million, while advertising revenue fell from £113.4 million to £102.2 million.

Earnings per share fell from 15.9p to 7.9p. The interim dividend remained unchanged at 7.5p.

New twist in trust battles

By OUR BANKING CORRESPONDENT

THE long battle between the business empire of the late Sir Walter Salomon and Anglo-Scandinavian, the investment trust, took a new twist when Scottish Cities investment trust, formerly run by Sir Walter, launched an £18 million bid for Anglo-Scandinavian. The bid follows attempts by Anglo-Scandinavian to take over Lancashire & London, another of the investment trusts run by the Salomon family interests.

Scottish Cities is offering shares worth 90 per cent of Anglo-Scandinavian's asset value, with a cash alternative of up to 82 per cent of asset. The trust owns 10 per cent of Anglo-Scandinavian's shares. Anglo-Scandinavian's board advised shareholders to take no immediate action.

Guinness support was just 'doing a favour'

By OUR CITY STAFF

ROGER Seelig, the former Morgan Grenfell corporate finance director, told trade department officials investigating Guinness's £2.7 billion takeover of Distillers, the drinks group, in 1986, he had done nothing dishonest, Elizabeth Gloster, QC, prosecuting, told the second Guinness trial.

Miss Gloster, continuing her opening address on the second day of the trial at Southwark Crown Court, said Mr Seelig denied any indemnity was paid to Henry Ansbacher and Company, the merchant bank, which became involved in the Guinness share support operation.

"He tried to suggest that it was no more than a loose, back-scratching arrangement, that is, you do me a favour now and I will not forget you in the future," she said.

Lord Spens, Mr Seelig's co-defendant, did admit to inspectors "in terms" that during Guinness's battle for the Scottish drinks company Mr Seelig asked him to support the Guinness share price by buying shares and he would be protected by an indemnity of up to £10 million.

Mr Seelig, aged 46, denies two charges of false accounting under the 1968 Theft Act and one under the 1958 Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act. Lord Spens, aged 49, denies a charge of false accounting. Both deny a joint charge under the Prevention of Fraud (Investments) Act. After Mr Seelig's arrest, Lord Spens bought 100,000 shares via an Ansbacher nominee company. Next day, Lord Spens told his superiors and was informed it was not company policy to support Guinness's share price and he should sell them.

He approached two of his firm's clients and got their agreement to buy Guinness shares after promising they would be protected against loss. One client bought 2.4 million shares, although 500,000 were later sold and a second had 250,000. After the bid closed, both decided to sell. To avoid more than two million shares going on the market at that time, Lord Spens arranged them to be bought for more than £7.6 million via Ansbacher nominee companies.

It was also agreed Guinness would pay an equivalent amount interest-free to Ansbacher so the merchant bank would not be "out of pocket" - which amounted to Guinness buying its own shares. When the true nature of the transaction emerged, Lord Spens suggested the shares belonged to Morgan Grenfell, while Mr Seelig said they were owned by Ansbacher. The trial continues on Monday.

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WINNERS OF WHAT INVESTMENT TRUST COMPANY OF THE YEAR AWARD

end-of-quarter buying one
bonded with strong bond pri
to push share prices high
rising shares outnumbered
falling ones by about two to
one.

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- ABBEY TAKEOVER 27
- LETTERS 28

WEEKEND MONEY

THE TIMES SATURDAY SEPTEMBER 28 1991

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Edited by Lindsay Cook

NatWest limits choice for investors

Only a year after National Westminster Bank employed a politician and a footballer to sing the praises of independent financial advice, the bank has decided to set up a life company and limit the choice available to customers.

"You would not go to Sir David Steel for an independent view of politics, or Kenny Dalglish for an unbiased assessment of football," the bank used to say.

When NatWest Life is launched in about a year's time, customers will not be able to go to the 3,000 NatWest branches for wide-ranging investment advice. They will only be sold NatWest Life products.

The bank, which spent millions of pounds promoting its independent stance, has decided that there is more money to be made by limiting the choice of its customers and doubling its investment salesforce. It says the development of a life company with Clerical Medical will produce "considerably greater

returns for shareholders". NatWest is the second high street bank this week to consider the shareholders ahead of the customers who vastly outnumber them. Abbey National is to buy Scottish Mutual, a middling assurance company with a lacklustre performance record. The two will set up Abbey National Life, and only the investment products of the new company will be available through Abbey National branches from January 1993.

The defection of NatWest to the ranks of the tied agents, after promoting the value of choice, made yesterday a sad day for investors. However good the new "simple", "less complicated" products are, they cannot be the best in every field.

The bank claims that few of its customers realise the value of the service they have been getting,



COMMENT

LINDSAY COOK
WEEKEND MONEY EDITOR

that trust in NatWest was more important. The small percentage of sophisticated and wealthy customers who want a choice will still be given one through NatWest Insurance Services. All they need to do is ask, says NatWest. In practice this is likely to mean that branches will attempt to sell everyone NatWest Life products and only as a customer heads for the door without buying will they be told about the independent investment arm.

While NatWest branches remain independent, every high

street has easy access to independent advice.

Many who have opted for the higher profits of tied agency have blamed the Securities and Investments Board for insisting that independent advisers should reveal to customers the level of commission they receive. They neglect to say that this coded information is not revealed at the point of sale but hidden in documents sent during the cooling off period.

One life company accidentally sent the information to hundreds of customers of its main tied

agent. Not one customer commented.

The Bradford & Bingley Building Society, with 300 branches, will be the largest independent in the high street from 1993. It says it remains committed to independent financial advice. As the seventh largest mutual building society it does not have shareholders to consider.

Debt trap

The total of £8.3 million so far paid out this year to hapless elderly investors tempted into home investment income plans is a hopeful sign. Life companies at last seem to be taking their responsibilities to monitor the activities of their tied agents and clamp down where necessary. They are

admitting that they should have taken a more active part in making sure investors knew what they were taking on. The payments come not a moment too soon.

But there are hundreds more investors who are trapped in a spiral of debt. The bonds that were meant to cover monthly repayments on mortgages taken out to fund the scheme are not doing so. Some people face having their homes repossessed.

Another tied agent of a large life company is under investigation. This must be carried out quickly and compensation paid. The life office concerned must also work together with the building societies that lent money so penalties can be waived or arrangements made to reschedule mortgage repayments.

Laurio must put pressure on life companies to pay up. Fimbra, which regulates independent advisers, must also speed through its investigations of a small number of its members who sold these plans.

Loans charging 100% interest may survive law change

Borrie rejects cap on rates

By LINDSAY COOK
MONEY EDITOR

LEGISLATION proposed this week to crack down on illegal money lenders will not attempt to outlaw loans charging interest rates of 100 per cent or more. Expensive credit does not concern Sir Gordon Borrie, the director general of fair trading, if it is freely entered into.

Sir Gordon wants the Consumer Credit Act 1974 to be upgraded to deal with lending that involves an element of exploitation. For that reason, a high rate of interest will not be enough for deals to be set aside by the courts if the charges go ahead.

Sir Gordon said he does not want ceilings set for loan rates as in France, the Netherlands and America, among other countries. These would be complicated and, if set high, could encourage a general increase in rates charged. If they were low, they could prevent poorer people from being able to borrow from legitimate sources.

Lenders that provide cash collection services for borrowers, and those that lend to people who might not be considered by high street lenders, can justify charging annual percentage rates as high as 100 per cent, Sir Gordon said.

London Scottish Bank has provided this sort of service for almost 100 years. Based in Manchester, the bank typically gives loans of £200 to people who do not have bank accounts and who pay back over 12 to 36 months. The maximum loan is £1,000 and no secured loans are offered. Most borrowers do not own their homes.

The average APRs for home-collected loans from London Scottish are 85 per cent to 89 per cent. These are changed periodically but are not linked to bank base rates, said Neil Copson, marketing director. Currently the company has 150,000 borrowers with loans totalling £60 million. It estimates that about 2 million households are potential customers.

Every applicant is visited in his or her home and about 85 per cent are turned down, said Mr Copson. This happens after a detailed check of income and outgoings that may reveal they cannot afford the loan.

The OFT report, *Unjust Credit Transactions*, points out that some lenders offering small, short term, weekly collected cash loans do not make checks as to whether the borrowers can afford the payments. They set their interest rates at high levels to cover the cost of default and bad debts.



Home loans: Jeff Harrison, of London Scottish, calls to collect the next instalment from Mavis Edwards

In this way good payers subsidise the bad payers. If checks were made, lower interest rates could be charged to the better risks.

Even loans charging 1,000 per cent interest may not be excessive, said Richard Thomas, director of consumer affairs at the Office of Fair Trading (OFT).

If a person borrowed £100 and paid back £10 a week for 14 weeks, the annual percentage rate (APR) would be 1,065 per cent. If there were no pressure to top up the loan and proper checks were made, such a deal should not fall foul of legislation, he said.

The successful cases under the Consumer Credit Act have been most concerned about the level of interest charged. Under the changes, the interest rate and prevailing market rates will be one factor in determining whether a transaction is unjust or socially harmful. In addition, the courts will be expected to decide whether any business behaviour or activity of the lender was deceitful or oppressive, or otherwise unfair or improper.

They will consider the financial pressure the borrowers were under, the age, experience, business capacity and state of health of borrowers. Also the degree of risk accepted by the lender.

whether a false cash price was quoted to disguise the interest rate, or any linked transactions were required.

Under the act, borrowers must ask the courts to reopen credit agreements if they find them extortionate. Since May 1977, when the provisions of the act were enforced, only four cases have succeeded. A further 11 were decided in favour of the lender.

A car loan of £400 had a flat rate of interest of nearly 100 per cent, Birmingham County Court held it was, *prima facie*, extortionate to charge 100 per cent when other lenders were charging 20 per cent. It substituted a rate of 40 per cent.

In 1989 a borrower who took out three loans at flat rates of 78 per cent, 104 per cent and 156 per cent had them reset at 30 per cent by the Court of Appeal. The High Court had earlier fixed them at 15 per cent. Two other cases involved secured loans. The first had an APR of 39 per cent and was refused at 30 per cent, and the second had a flat rate of 42 per cent and was halved.

Over the years the highest interest rate held not to be extortionate was, in two cases, 48 per cent. Others not deemed to be extortionate involved interest rates of 18.75 per cent to 21.6 per cent.

A case involving credit charges of £450 on a loan of

£450 over 12 months, an APR of 319.6 per cent, and others offering similar rates, have been reported to the OFT but not tested by the courts.

The director general wants county courts to be able to reopen cases when lenders are seeking payment if they feel the terms are unjust, without the borrower having to make an application. He also proposes that the OFT and trading standards officers should be able to make applications when it is in the public interest.

The rulings on such cases would form precedents that would act as guidelines for future cases, Sir Gordon said.

Guy Dehn, legal officer at the National Consumer Council, said: "I think there is some case for some kind of capping of interest rates. Consumers can be hoodwinked."

Jean Eaglesham, senior researcher at the Consumers' Association, said the report was welcome. It was harsh and difficult to establish that an interest rate was grossly exorbitant. The proposals should make it easier for the courts to decide a credit deal was not fair practice.

She added that if ceilings were introduced for credit rates there could be a drift upwards. When the Money-lenders Act set a limit of 50 per cent, companies offered loans at 49.9 per cent.

CREDIT unions should be given more financial backing by central government so that financially stretched local authorities have more resources to encourage the spread of the credit union movement, the Office of Fair Trading said this week (Sara McConnell writes).

In its report, *Unjust Credit Transactions*, the OFT singles out credit unions as an important source of credit for people on lower incomes: those most likely to be forced into the arms of a backstreet broker offering credit at extortionate rates because they do not fit the criteria of high street banks and building societies.

Credit unions lend money at reasonable rates to those who have saved with them. Group members normally belong to the same trade union, church, residential community or company.

The report concludes, however, that "credit unions, on the British mainland at least, cannot yet be said to play a major role in providing a viable alternative to extortionate credit".

Credit unions in poor areas are likely to be poor themselves because they rely on savings from their members, the report points out. Many members will be high risk borrowers, at least in the early stages of formation of a union. However, the fair trading office welcomes the formation of credit unions for providing "the impetus of self help within a context of group

Unions 'deserve more credit'



Larkin: slow development

the guidelines of the particular union. Unions must have reserves equal to 10 per cent of their assets.

They do not have to wait for these to be established, however, before they start lending. There is no deposit protection fund, so if the credit union collapses, there is a danger that people will lose their money.

Paul Larkin, acting chief executive officer of the Association of British Credit Unions, said: "Development has been slow in this country, partly because credit unions are seen as the poor people's bank."

"We haven't been able to offer high interest rates in the past although this is better now rates have fallen. Things are better in America and Canada. There are also 510 unions in Ireland with 1 million members."

Most people borrowed from credit unions for home improvements, weddings, cars or consumer goods.

An option for people on low incomes who have a "continuing and real need" for help is the social fund. This offers means tested loans to applicants for budgeting.

The fair trading office agreed with comments from several respondents to its requests for information who considered that cash limits and other restrictions made the scheme largely ineffective. However, increasing the cash limits of the scheme would not change the means testing requirement, the OFT report points out.

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Credit ceiling enforced abroad

By SARA MCCONNELL

CITIZENS of France, Germany, the Netherlands and most states in America all have more protection from the courts than in Britain against offers of credit at extortionate rates.

France introduced a new system of credit ceilings last year, determined by the average market rates for various categories of loan. It is illegal to lend money at more than a third above these average rates and lenders can face imprisonment or fines.

There are between five and ten prosecutions a year for illegal lending, and the Comité Consultative d'Usure, an advisory body, deals with about 15 cases a month of usurious lending.

The law covers fixed and variable rate loans and refinancing loans, loans up to Fr10,000 (about £1,000), unsecured permanent and hire purchase loans above Fr10,000, and personal and other

loans larger than Fr10,000. Variable and fixed-rate mortgages taken out for more than two years and unsecured loans are also covered. The ceiling is revised every quarter.

In Germany, credit contracts can be declared void in the courts if they are "against good morals", after a court decision in 1979. This held that interest rates that exceeded double the average of bank rates offended good morals.

Rates on mortgages, instalment credit and overdrafts are monitored monthly by the Bundesbank, which also publishes averages for each of these types of loan. When interest rates are high, courts can intervene on contracts charging more than 12 per cent above the average. Long term loans of 100 months can be offered at 2.1 times the average if lenders build in cover for upward movements in rates. Courts will step in in cases where they consider the behaviour of lenders to be unacceptable in demanding excessive

security for loans or not assessing borrowers' ability to pay.

It is up to debtors to take cases to court, but when they do they are eligible for legal aid.

Ceilings on regular interest rates are imposed in the Netherlands and in most states in America. The Dutch have had legislation on rate ceilings for nearly 60 years. Regular interest rates, interest rates on arrears and the cost of early settlement of loans are all capped. These are based on the average of market rates by size of loan. Next year, a new consumer credit act will compel lenders to register loan transactions so that borrowers' commitments can be easily checked.

Lenders exceeding interest rate ceilings in some American states could find the contract invalidated and interest forfeited. All states have consumer protection laws covering limits on credit charges, related insurance and late payment penalties.

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Elderly still to claim for risky home plans

By SARA MCCONNELL

LIFE companies have paid out about £8.3 million so far this year to compensate more than 400 elderly investors who were persuaded by salesmen to take out high risk home investment income plans. Hundreds more have yet to come forward to claim or seek help.

The life assurance and unit trust regulatory organisation (Lautro), which regulates insurance companies, said this week that there was "at least one other major case in the pipeline involving a tied agent of a life assurance company". Some people could risk losing their homes because they cannot make payments on mortgages taken out to buy the investment bond. They were told that the bonds would generate enough income or grow sufficiently to cover the interest payments and have some income left.

A falling stock market eroded the value of the bonds and they failed to generate enough income to pay the mortgage. In some cases the home is now worth less than the mortgage secured on it. Most of the bonds were taken out between 1988 and 1990, when the housing market and the stock market were both booming.

Gresham Life has so far paid £318,000 compensation to 26 investors who were persuaded to take out a mortgage and use it to buy its investment bonds. The cases of four more are still being discussed.

Tim Elliott, Gresham's



technical manager, marketing, said a total of about £1.4 million was invested in the bonds, an average of £45,000 per bond. People took out mortgages of between £20,000 and £70,000.

The mortgages were arranged by the Guardian Building Society, now part of the Cheltenham & Gloucester.

Mr Elliott said: "We were aware that the bonds were being used for home income plans and it would have been better if they had never been set up. In hindsight we realised that it was difficult to

know whether the client understood the nature of the investment.

"Someone should have taken on the role to explain the combined impact of the plan and this should have been us."

Guardian Royal Exchange has paid out a total of £7 million to 350 investors, who put an average of £20,000 in an investment bond recommended by InterCity of Darlington, a GRE tied agent. InterCity has since gone out of business. A total of £10 million was received into the

bonds from mortgages taken out with the Newcastle, North of England and Staffordshire building societies between mid 1989 and mid 1990. Investors who made capital withdrawals on the bond or used part of the loan for other purposes will not get that money back.

Ken Franklin, GRE's marketing manager, financial services division, said that up to a third of investors had refused offers of compensation. About a dozen cases are still being investigated.

NM Financial Management has paid out £1 million to 58 investors who were put into the plans by one of the company's tied agents.

GRE's Mr Franklin gave warning that bonds could still be on sale by independent financial advisers as part of home income plans.

The Cheltenham & Gloucester said this week that it was trying to contact 216 investors who had taken out plans with Aylesbury Associates, the independent adviser now suspended by the financial intermediaries, managers and brokers' regulatory association (Fimbra).

Only 35 investors who took out mortgages with the C&G as part of the Aylesbury plan between June 1989 and April 1990 have come forward.

Power sale payment falls due

By LINDSAY COOK, MONEY EDITOR

SHAREHOLDERS in the 12 regional electricity companies will receive letters next week telling them they have until 3pm on October 22 to pay the second instalment for their shares. Those who fail to meet the deadline could lose their entitlement.

The second instalment is 70p. A further payment of 70p is due next September.

Those who want to sell their shares and realise a profit without paying the second instalment have to act quickly. When the companies

were floated at the end of 1990 there were numerous free or cheap share deals offered. Most of these expired by February this year.

Dunbar, Boyle & Kingsley, the private client stockbroker, will allow unlimited batching of shares by friends or families for each individual electricity company for a commission of 15 or 1.5 per cent, whichever is the greater. The offer was due to close on Monday but has been extended until October 11 to allow people to sell up to the last minute before

the second call is due. The firm will sell the shares between October 14 and 22, but the second instalment will then have to be paid.

The Share Centre in Tring, Hertfordshire, is offering to sell shares in the same company at £12.50 a deal, up to £2,000 for the whole family. Shareholders can use the new "no 3" certificates to sell without paying the second call-up until October 11. Those who sell by then will receive payment on October 21. The Share Centre has a free enquiry line on 0800 800008.

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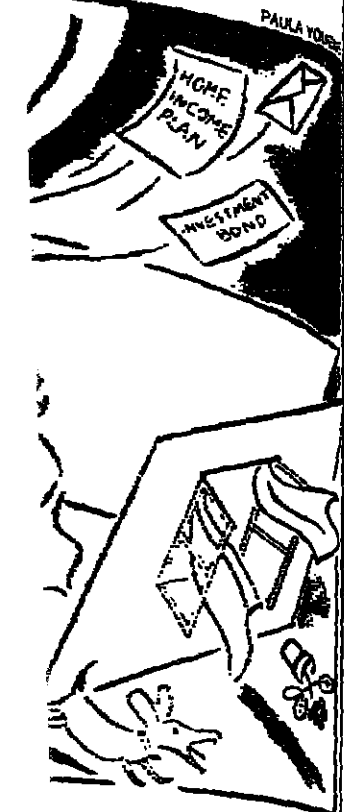
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Lenders reduce fixed rate mortgages

By LINDSAY COOK
MONEY EDITOR

BEFORE one fixed-rate mortgage offer is allocated it is being replaced by another in an attempt to attract new borrowers to a lacklustre housing market.

Cheltenham & Gloucester Building Society this week cut the interest on its five-year fixed rate mortgage to 10.2 per cent, an annual percentage rate (APR) of 11.6 per cent. The cut of 0.75 per cent will be given to applicants for the higher fixed rate.

The sixth largest society does not require borrowers to take out any endowment, buildings or contents insurance to qualify for the offer.

The offer is available on mortgages or remortgages of up to 80 per cent of the property valuation. Early redemption costs up to three months' interest. The payments on a £70,000 mortgage would be £531.25, compared with the society's base mortgage rate of 11.5 per cent, which would cost £598.95. The society also has one-year fixed-rate funds at 9.95 per cent on loans over £100,000.

TSB has launched a fixed rate of 10.4 per cent (APR 11 per cent) for two years and a five-year fixed rate at 10.5 per cent (APR 11.1 per cent). The loans are restricted to endowment or pension loans. There is an arrangement fee of £150 and the early redemption penalty is three months' interest.

Allied Irish Bank is offering loans fixed at 10.5 per cent for two years (APR 11.8 per cent). Confederation Bank has cut its five-year fixed rate mortgage from 11.25 per cent to 10.95 per cent (APR 11.9 per cent). The Hinckley and Rugby Building Society has a fixed rate loan at 10.45 per cent for two years.

Cheap mortgages on repossessed houses attract major interest

Bargain hunters besiege B&B

By SARA MCCONNELL

THOUSANDS of people telephoned or visited their Bradford & Bingley branch early this week for further information on buying a repossessed property with the mortgage rate pegged at 6.99 per cent for two years. But many had to leave their names and addresses and go away empty handed because, by mid-week, offices did not have full details of the properties on offer.

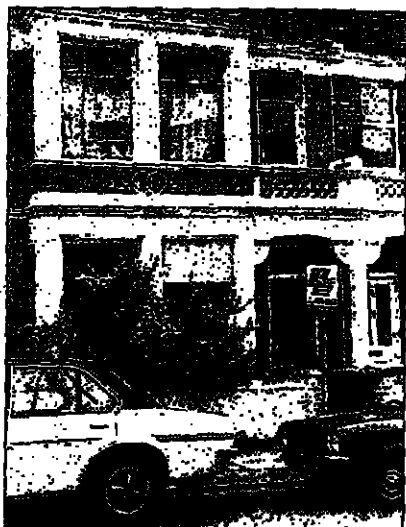
More than 1,000 properties repossessed by the society are for sale, ranging from run-down houses worth £4,000 to homes in London going for as much as £750,000.

The society said yesterday that it was receiving 2,000 enquiries a day at its 300 branches. Some branches, however, had to wait several days before they received lists of repossessed homes in their area, after the details of the offer were leaked to the press a week early.

Branches are only being sent lists of repossessed properties on which they granted mortgages. They are, therefore, having to piece together information on other homes in their area. Most are still waiting for display boards to be supplied by head office giving details of homes for sale under the scheme.

The Bradford & Bingley said: "We are putting display boards up in branches on a rolling basis. The scheme is really a decentralised one and it is up to the branches to publicise it."

The head office possessions department has spent all its time answering phones and hasn't had time to send out lists to branches. We were taken by surprise and it is inevitable we will have teething problems."



Knockdown deals: Bradford & Bingley is offering cheap loans on a wide range of repossessed properties

has seven repossessed properties on which it originally granted mortgages. Like the Moorgate branch, it has details of homes as far away as Kent and Essex because people commuting into the City arrange their mortgages in central London for convenience.

Only two properties were on offer through the Lewisham branch in southeast London on Monday morning. Staff said there had been "a lot of interest". By Tuesday afternoon, GA Property Services and other local agents had sent through details of eight homes in the area. The branch has 16 repossessed properties.

In Leeds, the branch had already had two or three applications by Tuesday. Kevin Denham, branch manager, said: "We have had an appreciable increase in phone calls and a lot of interest has been generated, peaking over last weekend. We have had quite a few interviews."

The branch has half a dozen repossessed properties for sale, mostly for between £30,000 and £60,000. Paul Tromans, Birmingham city centre manager, estimated that there were more than 100



properties on offer in the Birmingham and West Midlands area, with 15 available through the Birmingham New Hall branch.

He said: "There are 20 branches in the area and on average the big offices would have 10 to 15 properties while the small ones would have four to five. The list provided only referred to properties with mortgages from this

particular branch but we have managed to piece together more information."

Mr Tromans said a member of staff had been working full time for two days dealing with enquiries. The branch is taking details of the type of property people are looking for and the purchase price, but the list held by the branch does not reveal the price or the condition of the homes.

There are more than 200 repossessed properties with inner London postcodes for sale under the scheme, for which the branch had received one application for a mortgage by midweek. Moorgate granted loans on three homes that have now been repossessed.

The branch would be checking that the buyers would not be "here today, gone tomorrow". Mr Firth said: "There is a degree of speculation creeping into the market with people buying now and hoping to make a capital gain."

B&B's Fleet Street branch

OFT to study forced sales

LENDERS who sell repossessed properties for less than the value of the mortgage just to get rid of them, thinking that they can claim under their indemnity insurance for the shortfall, could face an investigation by the Office of Fair Trading (Sara McConnell writes).

Sir Gordon Bowie, the director general of fair trading, gave a warning again this week that his office was keeping a watching brief on the whole operation of mortgage indemnity insurance. Apart from concern over repossessions, the OFT is also worried that lenders have no incentive to shop around for the cheapest cover because the cost falls on borrowers.

Lenders take this cover if they lend more than 70 per cent of the value of the property. The premium is

paid by the borrower but the cover is for the insurer's benefit.

If there is a claim, the insurer pays the lender and can then chase the borrower for the money.

In May, Sir Gordon expressed concern about mortgage indemnity policies at the lenders' annual conference.

He said: "Because concern has been expressed publicly, my officials are making enquiries into various aspects of the provision of mortgage indemnity insurance."

This year, for the first time, insurers have sustained massive losses because of a huge increase in numbers of repossessions, leading to claims on their indemnity policy to make up any shortfall. Some insurers, including Legal & General, have already said

they will chase borrowers to get their money back if they think they can pay.

Legally, building societies have an obligation to get the best possible price for a property. The Halifax, the Abbey National, the Woolwich, and the Nationwide, the four biggest lenders, all deny that they sell properties for a lower price than they could get, knowing they can claim on their indemnity insurance if there is a mortgage with a high percentage loan to valuation.

Once the property has been repossessed, most lenders continue charging interest to the borrower until the property is sold.

Managing agents are normally appointed to check the property is secure and maintained, involving lenders in extra costs.

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£50,000+	11.61	12.25	8.71	9.07
£25,000+	11.16	11.75	8.37	8.70
£10,000+	10.48	11.00	7.86	8.15
£5,000+	9.80	10.25	7.35	7.60

* Rates may vary. This is a variable rate of interest. Interest is payable monthly. Tax is deducted from the interest. The net rate is the rate after tax. The gross rate is the rate before tax. The net rate is the rate after tax. The gross rate is the rate before tax.

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For more information see the F&P Guide to the F&P Guide.

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☐ Interest to be paid monthly into my bank account. ☐ Interest to be added monthly to the account.

☐ I agree to be paid monthly into my bank account. ☐ I agree to be added monthly to the account.

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Small companies poised to make bigger impact

By HAZEL SPINK

WITH an end to the recession possibly in sight, the smaller companies sector that has been in the doldrums for the last two years has been tipped for a significant recovery.

Investors with large sums of money on deposit in banks and building societies are being advised to switch part of those assets into a unit trust investing in smaller companies. Leading unit trust companies are recommending investors move as much as 10 per cent of their United Kingdom equity portfolio.

Smaller companies have been particularly hard hit by the recession and unit trusts investing in them have reflected this. Over the last two years, the value of the average unit trust in this sector has fallen 26.5 per cent. Over the same period, the FT all-share index rose 13.08 per cent. Consequently, stocks in the sector are felt to be undervalued.

Some fund managers have been recommending them simply because they look cheap. Others have been waiting for a catalyst, such as the recovery in the economy, before doing so.

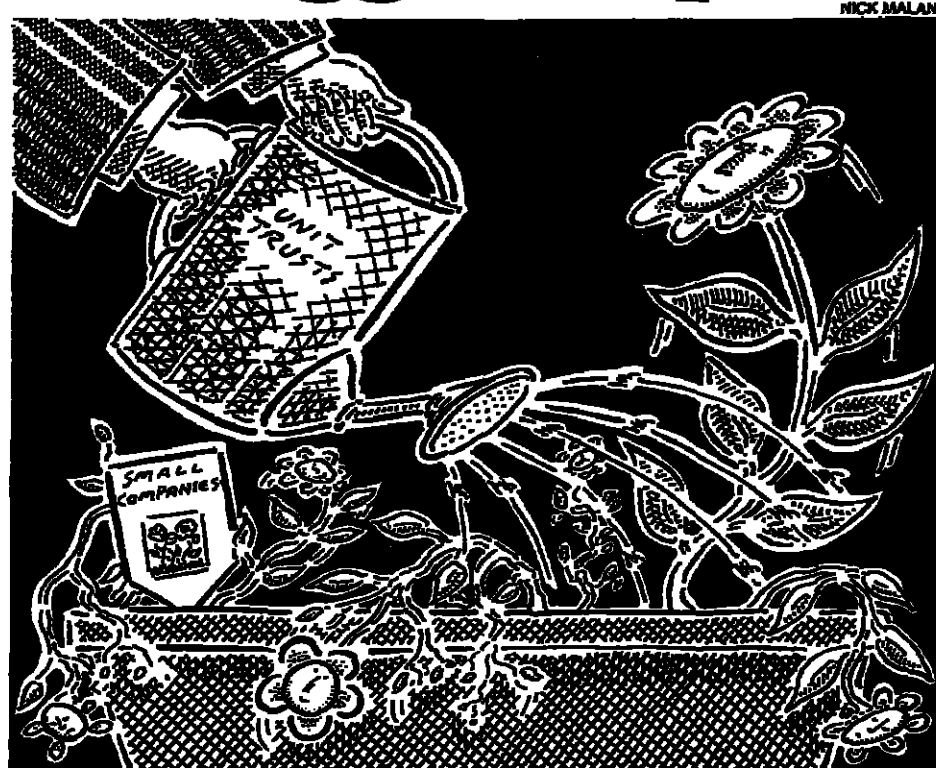
The fortunes of smaller companies are closely linked to the economy, much more so than those of larger companies. This is partly because small companies are not big exporters and so if there is a downturn in the economy they are badly affected.

Many larger companies, such as those in the FT-SE 100, currently get as much as 40 per cent of their earnings from overseas. If Britain does stage a recovery, smaller companies could be a major beneficiary.

In addition, the FT-SE is made up of so-called defensive stocks, that is those operating in areas largely unaffected by the recession, such as oil and water. This is good during a recession but such companies are less likely to participate fully in a recovery.

The smaller companies sector, however, is dominated by industries most vulnerable to a recession but most likely to benefit from an upturn. And generally, it is easier for small companies to grow.

The excessive optimism about the smaller companies



panies could be a major beneficiary. In addition, the FT-SE is made up of so-called defensive stocks, that is those operating in areas largely unaffected by the recession, such as oil and water. This is good during a recession but such companies are less likely to participate fully in a recovery.

The smaller companies sector, however, is dominated by industries most vulnerable to a recession but most likely to benefit from an upturn. And generally, it is easier for small companies to grow.

The excessive optimism about the smaller companies

sector, held until 1989 and reflected in the price/earnings ratios, has now disappeared. At the start of 1988 the p/e ratio on the Hoare Govett smaller companies index stood at a 26 per cent premium to the all-share index. This has now been translated to a 15 per cent discount.

John Ainsworth, of Hill Samuel Investment Management, said: "Our message to investors is to invest now, before the sector rises, in order to benefit from the anticipated upturn."

Because smaller companies have performed so badly over the past two years, stocks are

particularly cheap and represent extremely good value, he added.

Alan Miller, of Gartmore Investment Management, said: "We've been bullish about the smaller companies sector for the last three or four months."

Graham Kane, managing director of Société Générale Touche Renmant Unit Trust Management, was realistic about investor scepticism in the sector.

"We can understand the public's caution given its recent performance," said Mr Kane, "but because there is a greater degree of risk over the longer term, there is a greater prospect for high returns. If investors are prepared to take a medium to long term view, the smaller companies sector could be particularly attractive."

INTEREST RATES ROUND-UP

Bank	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate	Notice	Comments
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.58	5.34	2,500; none 031-442 7777
Barclays	6.15	6.25	5.03	2,500; none 0804 282891
First National	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071 632 6543
Halifax	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 051 988 3276
Lloyds	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 0742 526556
NatWest	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-574 3374
TSB Bank	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 031-555 8858
WCA	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-600 6008

HIGH INTEREST CHEQUE ACCOUNTS

Bank	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate	Notice	Comments
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.58	5.34	2,500; none 031-442 7777
Barclays	6.15	6.25	5.03	2,500; none 0804 282891
First National	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071 632 6543
Halifax	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 051 988 3276
Lloyds	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 0742 526556
NatWest	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-574 3374
TSB Bank	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 031-555 8858
WCA	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-600 6008

BUILDING SOCIETIES

Bank	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate	Notice	Comments
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.58	5.34	2,500; none 031-442 7777
Barclays	6.15	6.25	5.03	2,500; none 0804 282891
First National	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071 632 6543
Halifax	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 051 988 3276
Lloyds	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 0742 526556
NatWest	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-574 3374
TSB Bank	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 031-555 8858
WCA	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-600 6008

CASH/CHEQUE ACCOUNTS

Bank	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate	Notice	Comments
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.58	5.34	2,500; none 031-442 7777
Barclays	6.15	6.25	5.03	2,500; none 0804 282891
First National	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071 632 6543
Halifax	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 051 988 3276
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NatWest	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-574 3374
TSB Bank	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 031-555 8858
WCA	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-600 6008

NATIONAL SAVINGS

Bank	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate	Notice	Comments
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.58	5.34	2,500; none 031-442 7777
Barclays	6.15	6.25	5.03	2,500; none 0804 282891
First National	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071 632 6543
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Lloyds	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 0742 526556
NatWest	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-574 3374
TSB Bank	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 031-555 8858
WCA	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-600 6008

FIRST TIME BUYERS

Bank	Fixed Rate	Variable Rate	Notice	Comments
Bank of Scotland	6.48	6.58	5.34	2,500; none 031-442 7777
Barclays	6.15	6.25	5.03	2,500; none 0804 282891
First National	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071 632 6543
Halifax	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 051 988 3276
Lloyds	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 0742 526556
NatWest	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-574 3374
TSB Bank	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 031-555 8858
WCA	6.25	6.35	5.14	1,000; none 071-600 6008

BRIEFINGS

STANDARD LIFE is scrapping its with-profits endowment policy next year and replacing it with Homeplan, a potentially more volatile package that includes a unitised with-profits fund guaranteed not to decrease as long as the plan is maintained until the end of the term.

There are nine other funds, including a managed, equity, fixed interest, index linked and cash fund. Borrowers will be able to switch funds and the first switch in a year is free. The proportion of payments into the unitised with-profits fund cannot be varied.

For the first time, Standard Life is offering a low-start option so that borrowers do not start paying the full premium until the fourth year of the term.

A tax-free savings plan for children is being offered through Leeds Permanent.

Financial Planning, the independent advice arm of Leeds Permanent Building Society, SureStart, offered by the Homeowners Friendly Society, allows investment of up to £18 a month, £200 a year or a lump sum of £1,600.

Family Assurance, the largest friendly society, has launched the Benefit Bond that also allows payments of £18 a month or £200 a year into the tax-free investment. The maximum lump sum is £1,500. Premiums are invested in the Sovereign Fund, which since its launch a year ago has risen 19 per cent.

Black Horse Life has launched a bond for cautious investors. The Capital Generator Bond is first of all paid into the Black Horse Cash Fund and is then paid into unit-linked funds over two years. The minimum investment is £2,000. The bond is intended for investors who are worried about the consequences of getting their timing wrong.

Scottish Widows is to launch a Japanese Trust. The fund is a revamped version of the insurance group's Pacific Trust. A savings plan starting at £30 a month is available, plus bonuses of up to 1.5 per cent, until October 18. The initial charge is 6 per cent and the annual fee is 1.5 per cent.

Kleinwort Benson Investment Trust Management is to launch a savings scheme for the Kleinwort High Income Trust, its new split-level investment trust. The minimum investment is £25 a month or a £250 lump sum. There is an administration charge of 0.5 per cent.

Alliance & Leicester (Isle of Man) has launched a one-year investment bond paying 11.6 per cent on sums over £10,000.

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You will not be able to start an M&G PEP 1991/1992 via M&G Income Investment Trust P.L.C. if your application form arrives after 10.00am on 17th October 1991.

To: The M&G Group, M&G House, Victoria Road, Chelmsford CM1 1FB. Tel: (0245) 266266 (Business Hours). Please send me details of M&G Income Investment Trust P.L.C. and The M&G Full £6,000 PEP.

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Portfolio PLATINUM

For readers who may have missed a copy of *The Times* this week, we repeat below the week's *Portfolio* price changes (today's are on page 29).

Day	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun	Week
1	+7	+2	+4	+8	+4			
2	+5	+5	+6	+4	+6			
3	+8	+7	+4	+2	+7			
4	+6	+3	+3	+8	+3			
5	+8	+7	+4	+2	+7			
6	+5	+5	+6	+4	+5			
7	+5	+1	+2	+7	+3			
8	+6	+2	+4	+3	+4			
9	+8	+8	+3	+2	+8			
10	+4	+1	+3	+7	+3			
11	+4	+1	+2	+6	+3			
12	+9	+6	+4	+3	+8			
13	+4	+1	+2	+6	+3			
14	+5	+4	+7	+5	+6			
15	+8	+2	+5	+9	+3			
16	+7	+6	+4	+2	+6			
17	+6	+3	+4	+8	+3			
18	+9	+6	+3	+2	+7			
19	+8	+4	+5	+4	+5			
20	+7	+2	+5	+6	+3			
21	+8	+6	+5	+3	+7			
22	+5	+4	+7	+4	+5			
23	+4	+2	+3	+6	+5			
24	+5	+4	+6	+4	+5			
25	+6	+3	+5	+8	+3			
26	+8	+6	+5	+2	+6			
27	+4	+1	+2	+6	+3			
28	+5	+6	+7	+4	+5			
29	+7	+2	+4	+7	+3			
30	+4	+4	+6	+4	+5			
31	+9	+6	+3	+2	+7			
32	+5	+4	+5	+5	+5			
33	+4	+1	+2	+6	+4			
34	+6	+2	+4	+7	+3			
35	+5	+2	+4	+7	+4			
36	+4	+2	+2	+5	+3			
37	+4	+4	+5	+5	+5			
38	+5	+1	+2	+7	+3			
39	+7	+6	+4	+3	+8			
40	+4	+1	+2	+5	+3			
41	+6	+2	+4	+7	+3			
42	+8	+7	+5	+2	+6			
43	+4	+1	+2	+5	+4			
44	+6	+4	+6	+4	+6			

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Sum total of small is large

From M. Potok
Sir, I agree wholeheartedly with your correspondent E. A. Shelley (September 14) when he complains about the substantial drop in income from savings with the building

societies since last year. In fact I should go even further. Why is it that the income from savings increases with the amount of deposit? In effect those of us of modest means are made to contribute to the income of those better off.

Nationwide delay

From M. J. Calder
Sir, A year ago I had exactly the same experience with Nationwide Anglia Building Society as Mr MacNeill (September 21), when I waited for two months to receive an even larger balance of endowment policy proceeds after repaying my mortgage loan.

From the many telephone calls (my letters were not answered), I gathered that a staff shortage was the cause of the delay. What concerns me is that, a year later, nothing has apparently been done to improve the situation and that a large organisation like Nationwide still does not respond to letters from customers who have suffered worry and expense on (certainly in my case) a substantial scale.

Yours faithfully,
M. J. CALDER,
42 Carson Road,
SE21

Surely the building societies derive their income from the total of the deposits and the total contributed by small investors is bound to exceed that of the large ones if only because there are so many more of us.

Yours faithfully,
M. POTOK,
West Wind,
Frlford Heath,
Abingdon,
Oxfordshire.

Useless statistics

From Mr W. Chambers
Sir, I am among those who sought to change their current accounts, but I refuse to answer questions that are impertinent. In order to open a small account into which I would pay a fixed monthly amount by direct credit and from which I would pay household expenses (no overdraft is required for an obvious reason), why should I

Assisting charity with or without the help of credit cards

From Dr Peter G.F. West

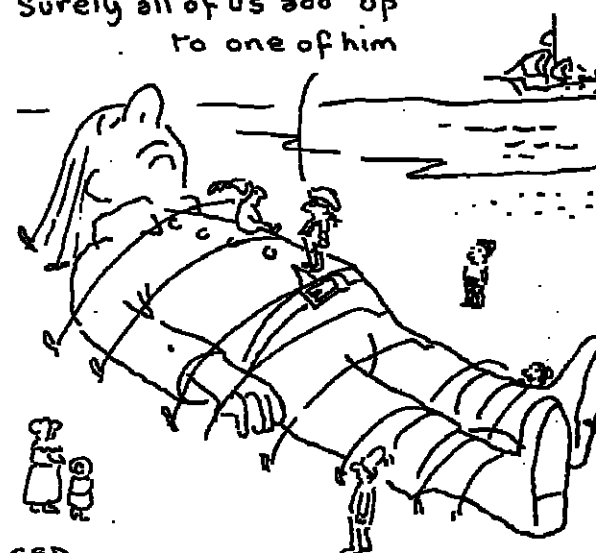
Sir, I would suggest to Rev. S. Salter (Weekend Money Letters, September 14) that the Oxfam Visa card is worth consideration. There is no annual charge, over £300,000 has already been raised for Oxfam's work around the world, and the card is frequently admired at the till for its colourful picture of the world.

Not only do I benefit from

up to 60 days credit on purchases, but I also borrow on the day after statement day for 1½ per cent, which is an interest rate of 11 per cent if paid off in full just before the statement two months later. Occasionally I have been caught out by a postal delay or bank holiday and paid interest when trying to cut it too fine.

Yours faithfully,
PETER G.F. WEST,
Consultant psychiatrist.

LETTERS
Surely all of us add up to one of him



GED

give my age (other than "over 18"), whether I am married or living in sin or whether I own my house? These are irrelevant matters - particularly when the society concerned is indebted to me to the extent of tens of thousands of pounds.

Yours faithfully,
W. CHAMBERS,
8 Beech Road,
Salisbury,
Bristol.

All is quiet from building society

From Mrs Lorna Campbell
Sir, It was with interest that I read of Mr MacNeill's experience with the Nationwide Anglia Building Society.

I, too, have received most unsatisfactory treatment from this same building society. I am still waiting for a mortgage, which was taken out with them in joint names, to be transferred to my name over a year after all the relevant papers were put in the society's hands.

This is despite constant enquiries and requests for some action.

I finally wrote to the managing director six weeks ago and have not yet had the courtesy of an acknowledgement, far less a reply.

In view of this, I contacted the Building Societies Ombudsman to assist me with my problem.

I heartily concur with Mr MacNeill's advice to prospective buyers to avoid this building society when taking out a mortgage.

Yours faithfully,
MRS LORNA CAMPBELL,
11 Patrickhill Road,
Glasgow.

Little used cards present hidden menace

From Mr Roy Worthington
Sir, The widespread use of the cards involves a hidden menace for account holders, especially those who do not use them regularly and might therefore not realise that they are missing for some time after burglary or loss.

My humble understanding in circumstances where cards have been stolen, and then fraudulently used by the thief, is that the account holder may be responsible for losses incurred by the issuing banks, until such time as they have been informed of the loss of the card.

Presumably substantial sums could be, therefore, involved, especially with a debit card, and I wonder if you might care to run a feature on



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this in the paper, and also comment on the protection available under household insurance policies.

Yours faithfully,
ROY WORTHINGTON,
Jubilee Cottage,
30 Shortlands Road,
Kingston upon Thames
Surrey.

Card switch

From G. Fisher
Sir, The correspondence about the vulnerability of plastic cards has been emphasised to me this week when my son received, in an envelope addressed to him, a Switch card for someone else, sent by

Midland Bank. This could surely have been misused even in the absence of the PIN number.

Yours faithfully,
G. FISHER,
3 Dadfield Close,
Cuddington,
Aylesbury,
Buckinghamshire.

Electing to save dollars

From P. H. Dunn
Sir, Can you please help me with advice on the best way to invest up to £10,000 in an interest bearing dollar account, either in main line American bank or US Government Stocks.

I would want to buy and hold in dollars together with accumulated interest, so that I have a hedge, in the event of the Conservatives' defeat in the next general election.

With that in mind, one would buy dollars between now and late November at hopefully 1.70 plus.

Yours faithfully,
P. H. DUNN,
72 Whitchurch Road,
Cardiff.

Touche Ross replies:

It is hard to say what is the "best" way to invest this sum but the following points should be considered:

a) An investment in a dollar denominated bank account is similar to an investment in an ordinary bank deposit account except that the sterling value of the sum deposited will vary as a result of fluctuations in the exchange rate between the UK and America; the interest rates paid will also reflect US rather than UK conditions.

b) An investment in US government stocks has all the characteristics of the bank account with the additional feature that its dollar value will fluctuate according to variations in market conditions (principally interest rates) in the US; it is therefore inherently more risky than the bank account.

It is relatively easy to make either sort of investment. If a bank account is chosen, any of the major UK banks will be able to assist with and advise on its opening. If government stocks are chosen, a stockbroker should supply the equivalent service.

From a tax point of view, one should bear in mind:

a) The interest arising from either type of investment is taxable in the UK.

b) A capital gains tax liability may arise on a holding of government securities when they are ultimately sold or redeemed, calculated by reference to the original sterling cost of the stocks and the sterling equivalent of the disposal proceeds (at the exchange rate of the date of disposal), subject to indexation relief and the annual £5,500 exemption.

c) Perhaps surprisingly, there is also an exposure to capital gains tax with the dollar bank account, each withdrawal from which counts as a disposal of a chargeable asset (the gain being calculated as for the government stocks, with a proportionate part of the cost being used where a partial withdrawal is made).

d) Assuming there are no other connections with the US, there would be no US income or capital gains tax to pay.

Published replies marked with the triangular logo are by Maurice Parry-Wingfield, national tax partner at Touche Ross, the accountant, in association with The Times. Readers' letters are welcomed, but The Times regrets it cannot give individual replies.

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● Ex dividend ● Ex alt b Forecast dividend ● Interim payment passed ● Price at suspension ● Dividend and yield exclude a special payment ● Pre-merger figures ● Forecast earnings ● Ex other ● Ex rights ● Ex scrip or share split ● Tax-free ... No significant data.

THE TIMES UNIT TRUST INFORMATION SERVICE

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Laura Thompson

A Saturday night out which left me hating boxing

I shall always think of last Saturday as the last day of summer. I spent the afternoon outside at Portobello Road bar, the street teeming with people watching the sun give its farewell performance, drinking and talking about the fight.

The fight was imparting an edge, an imminence, a collective focus to the nonchalant smiling afternoon atmosphere: it was as if everybody knew about it, cared about it, which in this part of the Portobello Road was probably true. Everybody had a ticket, or they were waiting for a man who would give them a ticket, or they had a ticket on the gate, or they were going to somebody's house to watch it, or they had money on it.

As day turned to dusk, as I changed my clothes into something more suitably in deference to my part in the spectacle, so this sensation vibrated ever more strongly inside me. I got in my car and put on the soul music, the audible echo of the orchestra turning up in my viscera. I was going to the fight.

The moment that I have always loved most at boxing matches (and which I was loving, although I did not know it, for the last time) is the walk through the amassing crowd to the ridiculous privileged seats, that tinging, self-conscious strut, between boys wearing hard-faced expressions, between girls wearing red satin shorts, between seen-it-all men wearing teddy bear coats in all of us playing our part in this real life piece of cinema. It is the moment when I have always found the bitter-sweet savour of a fight most pungent to the taste.

Tonight, though, the taste was obscure, elusive, ominously subdued, overtly imminent — as if this crowd was expecting, demanding, something that would take it out of itself and make all the fairy-tale build-up come true. For the moment it was not going to feel anything. It was not going to waste its capacity for the transcendent experience.

In the ring, a fight was taking place but it was like something on a scarcely-regarded television screen; if anything of note were to happen, then one could, one felt, press the stop button, rewind and have a proper look at it, at one's emotionally-detached leisure.

'It was the punch that did it, not the hype. It was the hype that made the crowd try to storm the ring'

The call to ban boxing is merely a knee-jerk response. The indictment of what Julian Critchley called "potentially lethal hype" is merely a desire to put the blame somewhere other than the obvious place, in the nature of the sport itself. It was the punch that did it, not the hype. It was the hype that made the crowd try to storm the same ring they had ignored during the undercard.

Henceforward, the hype will probably calm down, but the punches will not. Last Saturday left me with the raw reality of boxing and left me hating it. What I wonder is whether those who still love the sport are more or less realistic about it than I am.

BOXING

Polls show a majority to be against a ban

By SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

DICK Owen, the father of Johnny Owen, who died as a result of a brain operation after his bout with Herol Graham at age 21, still believes that professional boxing should be allowed to continue.

He was speaking in London yesterday on ITV's *The Time of the Place*, which was discussing whether boxing should be banned in the light of the news that Michael Watson's condition was still critical.

When asked by John Stapleton, the presenter of the programme, "if you had another last fight with Johnny's talents what would you say to him if he said 'Dad, I want to be a boxer'?", Owen said: "With dedication, I would tell him to go ahead with it. I'd watch him and tell him to go ahead with it."

A poll taken among viewers of the programme registered 39 per cent (4,064 phone calls) in favour of banning boxing and 61 per cent (6,300) against banning

the sport. Rod Douglas, who also has a brain operation after his bout with Herol Graham at age 21, still believes that professional boxing should be allowed to continue.

Dr Adrian Whitson, senior medical officer of the board, said that this would not be possible because "no doctor can give a considered medical opinion in 30 seconds or a minute and a half. You've got to be able to stop that contest, take the boxer away from the ring, put him into a medical room, examine him and take him away and that's going to take 15 minutes."

A straw poll, taken on Thursday's *Question Time* on BBC 1, also produced a vote against a ban, by a 3-1 majority.

CYCLING

Longland looks ahead

By PETER BRYAN

GLENN Longland, the national 12-hours record holder with a ride of 300 miles, will be confirmed as this year's British best all-arounder time trial champion tomorrow, with an average speed of 26.94mph for 50 miles, 100 miles and 12 hours.

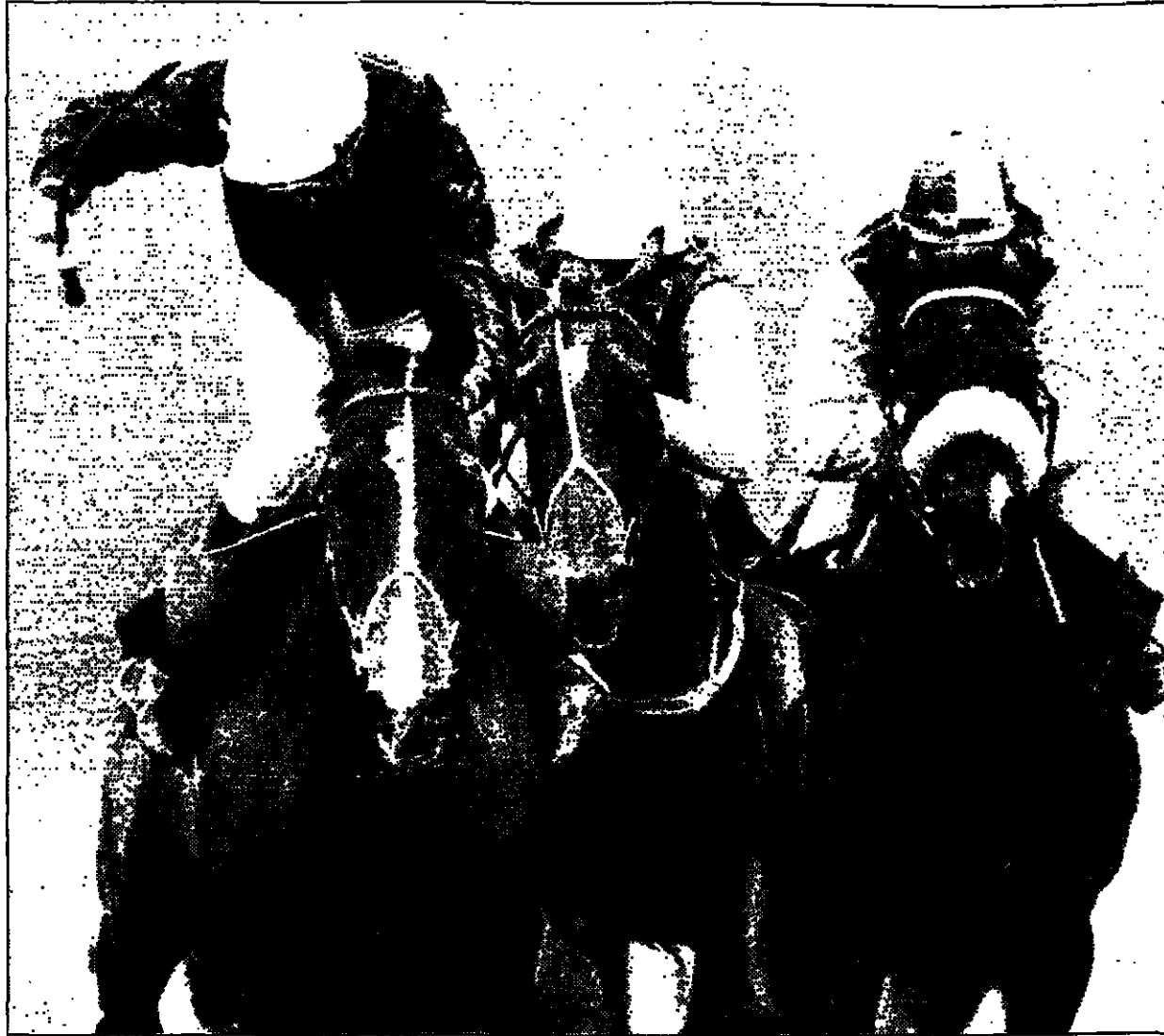
The Southampton rider is in an unassailable position on the last day of the competition and cannot be denied a repeat of his 1986 victory. But he said yesterday that he will not defend his title next year.

Instead, he wants to make his 24-hour time trial debut with the aim of improving the British record of 307 miles set by Roy Cromack, of Yorkshire, in 1969. Cromack's is the oldest cycling

record still standing; he is the only rider to have passed the 500-mile milestone in a one-day ride.

Longland's second target for 1992 is the 12-hours tandem record of 277 miles with his partner, Neville Stroud.

The Southampton rider is in an unassailable position on the last day of the competition and cannot be denied a repeat of his 1986 victory. But he said yesterday that he will not defend his title next year.



John Reid and Assessor, left, power clear of their rivals to win the PCL Japan Society Stakes at Ascot yesterday

Tompkins takes honours with treble

By RICHARD EVANS

MARK Tompkins achieved a sparkling 254-1 treble at Ascot yesterday and had punters cheering all the way from Newmarket to Newcastle.

Canny Chronicle, who completed the three-timer in the Ewar Stud Farms For Apprentices Handicap, is leased by the Newcastle Evening Chronicle with 250 readers owning shares.

"Tompkins pioneered the idea of regional newspapers having horses in training and it has worked well as readers up and down the country."

"We have six horses currently owned or leased by newspapers," Tompkins said. "The Newcastle Evening Chronicle originally leased Canny Chronicle with an option to buy which it decided to take up recently after the horse won at Newcastle on Plate day."

Connections backed the three winners in doubles and trebles. "What a day. We thought we had a great chance but I have only had one winner at Ascot before," the trainer added.

Virkon Venture trotted up in his handicap debut in soft ground at Ayr last Saturday and Tompkins was anxious to run the three-year-old again before he was reassessed.

"It was a case of going for an apprentice race or coming here for a £12,000 handicap. Fortunately it worked out," he said after the bottom weight had won the A F Budge Limited Handicap by two lengths from The Glasho.

Gilt Throne finished fourth behind Sarcia in last week's Ayr Gold Cup and made the most of a 9lb turn round in the weights to snatch victory by a neck.

Sarcia, who was carrying ten stone and did not have the best

draw, will now step up in class and run in the Rous Stakes at Newmarket next week.

The all-conquering Richard Haasson yard can look forward to more success next season with Assessor who, in contrast to Badie, revelled in the rain-soaked ground to take the PCL Japan Society Stakes.

"He is a bell of a nice horse and should be rather useful next year," Haasson said. William Hill offer 40-1 against the Niniski colt winning the Derby.

The most impressive performance of the afternoon was reserved for the final race as shadows lengthened over the turf. Lausfranco Dettori was looking over his shoulder for non-existent dangers two furlongs out in the Kensington Palace Graduation Stakes and Red Slippers won in a canter.

Ladbrokes immediately offered 20-1 against the Nureyev filly winning next season's 1,000

Guineas. Luca Cumani said: "She is promising. I was so disappointed when she was beaten at Nottingham on her debut but subsequent events proved she had a hard task against Chicomond. She will probably go for the Rockfel Stakes."

Paul Cole intends to fly Generoso to Longchamp for next Sunday's Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe on the morning of the race. Yesterday he expressed slight concern at the soft going at the Paris track after being told it measures 4.3 on the penetrometer.

"Generoso has shown his best form on fast ground but he has handled soft ground twice," Cole said. "I don't think the soft will suit Suave Dancer unless they go a hack canter."

Ironically, every drop of rain will improve the chances of Stange, the other Cole-trained runner.

HAC blueprint proposes new racing authority

By RICHARD EVANS, RACING CORRESPONDENT

AN HISTORIC change in the way racing is governed is proposed in a blueprint due to be approved by the Horseracing Advisory Council next week. The Jockey Club, which has controlled the sport for more than 200 years, should give way to a new two-tier authority which is representative of racing's various interests, it says.

The power-sharing plan comes at a crucial time for racing as it grapples with the consequences of years of underfunding and criticism from Westminster that it lacks commercial and democratic accountability.

The HAC report meets the recommendation of the Commons home affairs select committee that there should be a "powerful and competent single body to speak for and manage the racing industry."

The blueprint envisages a new racing body — no name has yet been agreed although the British Horseracing Authority remains favourite — which has between 15 and 25 representatives or nominees.

Owners, trainers, racecourses, jockeys and the Jockey Club would be among those represented, with no single faction having overall control. Some favour the Levy Board having a seat.

A smaller management board, which would be answerable to the main authority and possibly include outside professionals, would have its own executive to carry out the day-to-day functions of running racing.

The proposed structure, drawn up by a ten-man team led by Sir Nevill Macredy, the HAC chairman, also involves racing's existing bodies pooling their assets.

The HAC plan deliberately refrains from being too detailed in order to allow flexibility, but it will increase the pressure on the Jockey Club to agree to reform.

The Jockey Club, incorporated by Royal Charter in 1970, is a self-electing body which is officially responsible for the proper organisation, administration and control of all horseracing, race meetings and training in the UK.

Lord Hartington, senior steward, is currently heading a four-man team at Portman Square which is examining the possibility of changing the way racing is controlled.

The power-sharing issue is highly sensitive, given the Jockey Club's traditions and that internal discussions are being carried out amid considerable secrecy. Jockey Club officials are acutely aware of the need "to get it right."

So far the Jockey Club's public utterances have been confined to saying it is continuing to develop proposals for structural changes "consistent with the proposition for the formation of a racing board" put forward earlier this year by the Jockey Club and HAC to the home affairs select committee.

However, the racing board idea was a purely commercial concept and did not envisage sharing control of the sport.

Owners, racecourses and jockeys are now adamant that the Jockey Club must give way to a new ruling body — and they want to see Portman Square's proposals for reform on the table before racing's cash for getting 550 million from bookmakers goes to the Home Office for probable distribution.

The HAC plan will be forwarded to the Jockey Club and Sir Nevill is likely to seek a meeting with Lord Hartington and Christopher Harmer, chief executive of the Jockey Club, to discuss the recommendations — and the progress Portman Square is making towards reform.

In theory, the Jockey Club can ignore the HAC proposals and defend the status quo. That is unlikely in the present climate. However, a real doubt exists in the minds of most racing officials outside Portman Square as to the Jockey Club's determination to give up two centuries of unbridled power and control.



Hartington leads four-man Jockey Club team

CARLISLE

MANDARIN
2.15 Rotherham. 2.45 Nishkina. 3.15 Hoddam
Brig. 3.45 Valiant Dash. 4.15 Bear's Picnic. 4.45
Tasmin.

THUNDERER
2.15 Rotherham. 2.45 Nishkina. 3.15 Northern
Meadow. 3.45 Valiant Dash. 4.15 Bear's Picnic.
4.45 Spool.

GOING: FIRM, HARD IN PLACES (CHASE
COURSE); FIRM (HURDLES)

2.15 BROTHERS WATER NOVICES HURDLE
(£1,457; 2m 4f) (5 runners)

1.11 FIRST STAGE 3 (P) J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
2.24 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
3.24 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
4.24 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
5.24 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer

2.45 CITY OF CARLISLE LEISURE SERVICES
CLAM HURDLE
(£1,470; 2m 11f) (4)

1.2411 NISHKINA 11 (P) M H Easterly 1-1-3 L Wyer
2.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
3.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
4.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
5.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer

3.15 WEST CUMBERLAND INSULATION
COMPANY RED RUM HANDICAP CHASE
(£2,032; 3m) (2)

1.4811 HODDAM BRIG 55 (P) D J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
2.4811 HODDAM BRIG 55 (P) D J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
3.4811 HODDAM BRIG 55 (P) D J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
4.4811 HODDAM BRIG 55 (P) D J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
5.4811 HODDAM BRIG 55 (P) D J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer

Ascot
Going: good to soft

1.30 (1m 2f) 1. SHALIEE (John Frisco, 158 lb) 2. Magic Secret (Robin Gray, 4-1) 3. Jannet (Robert Scott, 14-1) ALSO RAN: 2.4811 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer 3.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer 4.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer 5.2411 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer

2.00 (1m 2f) 1. VIRKON VENTURE (A. Whelan, 151 lb) 2. Canny Chronicle (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 3. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 4. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 5. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb)

2.30 (1m 2f) 1. GILT THRONE (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 2. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 3. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 4. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb) 5. Gilt Throne (D. Haasson, 151 lb)

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3.45 WEST CUMBERLAND INSULATION COMPANY HANDICAP HURDLE (£1,740; 2m 4f) (5)

1.1111 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
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4.15 JOURNAL RACING EXTRA NOVICES CHASE (£2,017; 2m 4f) (5)

1.1111 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
2.1111 ROSTERHAME 55 (P) R J O'Shea 4-1-19 D Wyer
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4.45 ULLSWATER NOVICES HURDLE (£1,510; 2m 11f) (5)

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4.45 ULLSWATER NOVICES HURDLE (£1,510; 2m 11f) (5)

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MANDARIN
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GOING: GOOD TO FIRM
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World Cup holders face immense pressure to succeed without holding a home advantage

New Zealand state their clear intent

By DAVID HANDS, RUGBY CORRESPONDENT

"SHOW no mercy" is the opening line of the New Zealand theme tune, dreamt up by Steinlager, their sponsor, and surely no expression of intent could be more apposite. The All Blacks, holders of the Webb Ellis Trophy, spent their first full day in England yesterday, dealing with a calm self-confidence, with any suggestions that they are not what they were.

"I know we have a side that can win the World Cup but it won't be easy," John Hart said. "The expectation of success back home is immense but many people don't understand the advantage that sides like England and France have in playing at home, in front of their own crowds."

Hart, who shares the coaching duties with Alex Wyllie, has only recently been restored to a position of influence within the squad, having dealt primarily these last three years with New Zealand's colts, under-21 and lesser representative sides.

"The difference between him and Wyllie, who has been identified with the All Blacks' long unbeaten run which Australia ended last year, is substantial, in personality and approach. Both men contribute enormously to the New Zealand cause, however, and exude an air of competence which can never be confused with over-confidence.

impact on how people feel at the other end of the world that, at a time of economic depression, success on the rugby field becomes even more important than usual — and in the last 14 months, New Zealand has been defeated twice, by Australia.

So does Hart see the opposition in this World Cup — which begins at Twickenham next Thursday when England play the All Blacks — as coming primarily from the Wallabies, whom his players could meet in a semi-final in Dublin? "I think France will be difficult, particularly given their draw, and England's record suggests they are peaking for this World Cup."

"Don't forget, New Zealand won in 1987 from a fresh position. We had drawn with France and lost to Australia the previous year. We had no games to go in hot with the World Cup but we caught the world unaware, playing with a different style to 1986, and perhaps our preparation was better."

"Other countries have had the chance to study what we do. The main difference this year is that we have a very experienced side but we are coming off a long, hard season. Sides like England and France come in fresh, with good preparation."

"In some ways England will be the most difficult side we face in the tournament, because of the timing, because it's the first game, they are at home with an expectant crowd and we come into the competition cold. They have a wonderful tight five forwards



Front line: The New Zealand front row of, from left, Loe, Fitzpatrick and McDowell guard the Webb Ellis Cup

and two marvellous jumpers in Ackford and Dooley. "We won't be in the game unless we compete there but the key element for England is winning set-piece ball. If they don't get control of the ball, they could be in trouble."

Hart was warm in his praise

for the Australians, whom New Zealand beat 6-3 in the tightest of games last month, but described as "abundant" the seeding for the tournament which was done on the basis of 1987 form. "That's one fundamental flaw in the 1991 World Cup," he added,

though he admitted to retain the trophy New Zealand would have to beat the best of the rest at some stage. "The World Cup referees are scattered throughout London today, handling a variety of games. Harrow School are blessed with the presence of

Ion Vasilica of Romania, against Bedford, with Jim Fleming, of Scotland, running the touch. The Australian, Sandy MacNeill, handles Wasp's game against Newcastle Gefford.

Saturday Review, page 16

Eagles prepare invitation

THE American Eagles open their World Cup programme by doing their best to dispatch Italy at Old Trafford next Saturday — the only game in pool one which they are given a prospect of winning, since New Zealand and England occupy the other slots — but thereafter they are kept to lure the Italians on tour to their own country (David Hands writes).

"I have 36 guys who want to play against New Zealand but we are just pleased to be in the World Cup," Jim Perkins, the Eagles' English-born coach,

said. "Our focus is against Italy and if we win, we envisage a scenario in which we go in against England on October 11 with both of us having won one and lost one, but they have everything to lose and we have nothing. But we don't have that opportunity unless we beat Italy."

The Americans have never played Italy but they are one of the countries the United States have targeted to establish playing relationships. It is important for the Americans to grade their opponents so that their own

players can gain experience without being completely out-matched: hence their programme this year which began with two victories over Japan, then defeat against Scotland and Canada, and concluded against France.

Perkins has watched his squad improve but it is a constant struggle, both in financial and geographical terms.

Simon Goughan, who has written an article, took only a limited part in Ireland's World Cup squad training in Dublin yesterday.

Harlequins prune schedule

FOLLOWERS of Harlequins should take the opportunity of seeing them play against Asquith at Kidbrooke today because the club holders will be sighted only rarely over the next month (David Hands writes).

Harlequins have conceded the unequal struggle with the World Cup, the divisional and county championships, and have arranged only one first-XV fixture for October.

Some dramatic pruning has given them a fixture list of 28 games this season. Colin Herdridge, the secretary, said,

"We have cut out all midweek games in September and October. "During October we have eight players with England, another seven or eight playing divisional rugby and Surrey, Middlesex, Sussex and Hampshire may take as many as 18 others. We can't try and tell the sort of opposition we play they will be facing a third XV. It doesn't help them and it doesn't help us."

The domestic game throws up some instructive pairings today: Bath, having failed to find

French opposition, play Cork Constitution, the All-Ireland league champions, while Gloucester, having lost to England and beaten Ireland in successive weeks, meet Northampton. The Gloucestershire flanker, to retire after breaking his leg in a training accident. "Waterloo are appealing to the Home Office in an attempt to retain Francis Ludeke, their South African signing, after he was detained by immigration authorities on his arrival on Thursday."

MOTOR SPORT

Petrol chemistry fuels suspicion between big two

From NORMAN HOWELL in BARCELONA

THE intensity of the competition on the track between Ayron Senna and Nigel Mansell for the world championship has been matched off the course this season by the fuel suppliers. The integration of engine and fuel programmes in Formula One has placed greater emphasis on the experimentation with different fuel mixtures for qualifying sessions and the grands prix themselves.

When Mansell left Ferrari at the end of last season, he carried with him the fuel for the Williams-Renault team, understood the full extent of involvement that Agip, their suppliers, had inaugurated with the Italian team.

After McLaren's early dominance in 1991, Eif, the field as Williams was four successive grands prix to put Mansell in with a chance of the championship. But now Shell, the suppliers of fuel to McLaren, have gained the upper hand.

This has brought allegations that tanks of Elf fuel had disappeared and that Ron Dennis, the owner of McLaren, had obtained a sample of Elf fuel which was being analysed by Shell.

Dennis is upset at this suggestion. "I can state categorically and unequivocally that at no time have McLaren, Honda or Shell ever acquired a rival's fuel and subjected it to analysis," he said yesterday. Dennis pointed out that Shell can, and does, buy fuel components on the open market.

"As is common practice, Shell bought from Elf and other sources a component that was used in our mid-season fuels," he said. "Elf's knowledge of this

purchase led them to believe we were following a similar fuel route." This was confirmed by two senior Shell executives — Roger Lindsay, the head of fuel development, and Mike Branigan, their manager of international motor sport.

"Some of the components can be likened to building blocks," Lindsay said. "They are by-products of the refining process and are then sold on the open market. So it is common practice for whoever needs a particular chemical to look it up, see who sells it and then buy it. That's all there is to it."

McLaren's fuel suppliers have now gone further thanks to a young engineer who, with the help of computer models, has discovered additional refinements. The latest batch of qualifying fuel was identified last Friday, tested on Tuesday and is being used this weekend in the Spanish grand prix here, a race which could give Senna his third drivers' championship.

That indicates how fast Shell is working to keep ahead. The Anglo-Dutch company also leads the field in the use of lead-free racing fuel. But the image of Formula One as one of people sneaking around and syphoning off cans of fuel to analyse.

"I consciously avoid being offered fuel mainly because it would raise all sorts of ethical problems," Dennis said. "But also because our fuel is a specially-tailored blend of components to meet the requirements of the Honda V12. It is extremely unlikely that this would work satisfactorily in any other engine. And the same could be said of the Elf fuel regarding our engine."

BARCELONA DETAILS

PRACTICE TIMES: 1, G. Berger (Austria), McLaren-Honda, 1 min 18.751 sec; 2, N. Mansell (GB), Williams-Renault, 1 min 19.070 sec; 3, A. Senna (Br), McLaren-Honda, 1 min 19.474 sec; 4, R. Barrichello (Br), Williams-Renault, 1 min 19.545 sec; 5, M. Satorra (Sp), Minardi, 1 min 20.127 sec; 6, M. Piquet (Br), Benetton-Ford, 1 min 20.137 sec; 7, A. Prost (Fr), Ferrari, 1 min 20.197 sec; 8, J. Alesi (Fr), Ferrari, 1 min 20.200 sec; 9, J. Agnelli (Fr), Ferrari, 1 min 20.200 sec; 10, M. Brundle (GB), Williams-Renault, 1 min 20.200 sec; 11, J. Herbert (Br), Williams-Renault, 1 min 20.200 sec; 12, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 13, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 14, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 15, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 16, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 17, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 18, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 19, J. J. Lehto (Fin), Lotus, 1 min 20.200 sec; 20, J. J. 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Americans strike early blows in Ryder Cup

Spaniards save Europe from a 4-0 drubbing

From Mitchell Platts, golf correspondent, at Kiawah Island, South Carolina

SEVERIANO Ballesteros and José María Olazábal yesterday completed another famous victory after being embroiled in a rules dispute with their American opponents during the opening four-ones of the Ryder Cup here on the Ocean Course.

The Spaniards called in the referee after spotting that Chip Beck and Paul Azinger had broken the "one-ball" rule, a condition of play in the match, at the seventh hole.

But the Americans, who stood to lose the hole, escaped without a penalty because Ballesteros and Olazábal delayed bringing the infringement to the attention of the referee or their opponents until they left the ninth green.

The penalty can only be imposed if the violation is reported before the players tee off at the next hole.

Ballesteros and Olazábal, however, put the incident behind them and from three down after nine holes they recovered to win 2 and 1. It provided Europe with their only success on a morning when the United States took a commanding 3-1 lead as a freshening wind provided the course with additional protection.

Azinger and Beck were given the opportunity to exact revenge when in the afternoon four-balls they once again found themselves paired against Ballesteros and Olazábal. They were delayed from teeing off by 40 minutes



David Miller, page 35
Ireland win, page 35

because their morning round took four hours 25 minutes to complete.

Beck had broken the rule by driving at the seventh with a ball of a different compression to that which he had teed-off at the first hole.

The rule states that a player must adhere to the same brand of ball and the same compression of ball, although in foursomes play the rule is relaxed to allow each player the opportunity to tee-off with his choice of ball at alternate holes.

Although it is not a rule of golf it is a condition of play not only for this match but also on both the US PGA Tour and the PGA European Tour. It would appear that Ballesteros and Olazábal missed the chance of claiming the hole through sheer lack of knowledge of the rule. Beck had started with a ball of 90 compression at the first but he drove with one of 100 compression at the seventh.

Ballesteros and Olazábal sought advice from Bernard Gallacher, Europe's captain, before stating their view and the four players debated the incident for more than ten minutes on the tenth tee.

Azinger admitted that the Americans had broken the rules, stressed that there was no intention to cheat but questioned why Ballesteros and Olazábal had waited for more than two holes to lodge their objection.

Ballesteros said: "It is nothing to do with cheating and we waited because I had sent Sam Torrance to get Bernard Gallacher so we could discuss with him what we should do." Gallacher, a stickler for the rules, took a firm grasp of the situation once he arrived at the tenth tee and he instantly recognised that no penalty could be imposed. He said: "The Americans broke the one-ball rule but we didn't claim when we should have done."

Larry Startzel, the chief referee, said: "The Europeans were aware of the violation but if you like they were one day late or a dollar short. The onus was on them to make the point known. What we have here is a bit of a fumble by both teams."

Azinger and Beck, three up at the turn, appeared to lose their concentration as they took three putts to lose the tenth and Ballesteros and Olazábal launched a magnificent counter-attack.



Happy winners: Ballesteros and Olazábal show their delight after fighting back to take the top match in the first series of foursomes

Olazábal hit a superb second shot to within three feet of the hole. Ballesteros made the putt for their first birdie of the match and he made a putt of six feet for another at the 13th to bring the match back to all square.

It was not until the 15th hole that Europe finally gained the lead for the first time in one of the four foursomes. There Olazábal played a marvellous recovery from a waste bunker to within two feet and Azinger missed a putt of four feet.

Ballesteros brought the match to an abrupt end at the 17th hole when from fully 25 feet he read a right to left putt to perfection.

Gallacher was well aware that the seventh win by Ballesteros and Olazábal as a partnership in the Ryder Cup could prove the most influential because it at least put one point on the board following a morning when the Americans unquestionably produced the best golf.

Hale Irwin and Lanny Wadkins extracted four birdies from the first five holes on

their way to a comfortable 4 and 2 win against David Gilford and Colin Montgomerie.

Raymond Floyd and Fred Couples played equally well to establish a four-hole lead with seven to play which proved decisive, despite Bernhard Langer and Mark James elbowing their way back into the match. Langer and James took three holes in succession from the 12th but the Americans won 2 and 1 helped by Floyd holing from ten feet at the 16th.

Nick Faldo and Ian Woosnam, two down after four holes, were all square against Payne Stewart and Mark Calcavecchia when Woosnam chipped close for a birdie at the 11th.

Woosnam, however, struggled throughout the morning on the greens, which became crisper and quicker as a freshening wind dried them out, and he missed from less than ten feet on each of the next two greens. Stewart and Calcavecchia won both holes although they did not secure their success until the 18th.



Pensive captain: Gallacher consults the scoreboard

WEEKEND PROGRAMME

Order of play Today

Foursomes: From 1pm, BST
Fourballs: From 5.30pm, BST

Tomorrow

Singles: From 2.30pm, BST

WEATHER: Today: Clear skies, with temperature in the mid-70s. Wind, 10mph from the northwest. Tomorrow: Clear skies, with temperature in the low 80s. Wind, 5mph from the northwest.

TELEVISION: Today: BBC1: 12.15pm-3.25pm: BBC2: 3.25pm-5.30pm: 8pm-11pm: Eurosport: 12.30pm-6pm: 7pm: Tomorrow: BBC2: 1.25pm-4pm: 6pm-10.30pm: Eurosport: 9pm-7.30pm.

PRE-MATCH BETTING (Cont.): United States 4-6: Europe 11-8, tie 11-1. Score (US prices first): 14-13-10-1, 10-1, 15-12, 9-1, 10-1, 15-12, 12-1, 12-1, 15-12, 11-1, 14-1, 15-12, 14-1, 15-12, 11-1, 17-1, 10-1, 20-1, 25-1, 15-10, 25-1, 33-1, 18-1, 25-1, 25-1, 40-1, 18-1, 33-1, 50-1, 19-1, 40-1, 65-1, 20-8, 65-1, 80-1. Most individual points:

Olazábal, Ballesteros, Stewart, 13-2; Faldo, 7-1; Woosnam, Couples, 9-1; Azinger, 12-1; Langer, 14-1; Calcavecchia, Wadkins, 16-1.

Hole	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Result
USA	5	5	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	438
EUR	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	438

Foursomes (United States names first)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Result
P Azinger, C Beck	4	W	4	6	3	4	4	5	3	4	5	5	4	3	4	5	5	2	2 and 1
S Ballesteros, J M Olazábal	4	C	4	4	4	4	5	3	5	4	3	3	3	3	4	5	5	2	2 and 1
R Floyd, F Couples	4	6	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5 and 4
B Langer, M James	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5 and 4
L Wadkins, H Irwin	3	4	3	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4 and 2
D Gilford, C Montgomerie	5	5	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4 and 2
P Stewart, M Calcavecchia	4	4	4	W	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4 1 up
N Faldo, I Woosnam	4	5	4	C	4	4	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	4 1 up

Foursomes result: United States 3, Europe 1.
W: won, C: conceded.

Ferguson's team admired at Tottenham

By CLIVE WHITE

PLEASEING though it will have been for Manchester United to receive the approval yesterday of Peter Shreeves, the Tottenham Hotspur manager, it is indeed not words that will bring the Football League championship back to Old Trafford after a break of 25 years, and in particular their deeds over the next three weeks.

After facing Tottenham at White Hart Lane today,

United must deal effectively with Liverpool and Arsenal in successive games at Old Trafford if their challenge for this year's championship is to be taken seriously. In the opinion of Shreeves, they are already worthy leaders.

"What pleases me as a coach is that the team topping the first division gets the ball down and relies on skill and movement," he said. "They have some excellent players."

Tottenham might be considerably closer in terms of

points to United had their home appearances not lagged behind due to their early European involvement. Their over-reliance on Lineker, however, is worrying, and it is time Durie started taking more of the load off the England forward.

With several defenders unavailable, Tottenham are forced to include four teenagers in their squad. "I wouldn't call it men against boys," Shreeves said indignantly. "That would be an insult to my players. When I was here before we sometimes had eight internationals in the reserves. That can work against you - you get an air of disenchantment about the place."

United are one club who can afford such riches, though there is no sign yet of any unrest. Webb, who murmured

something about a move a few weeks back, was a contented man once more until injuring ligaments in the Rumbelows Cup game against Cambridge on Wednesday. United have never been better equipped to cope with such losses.

The next three games will show what we are made of," Alex Ferguson, their manager said yesterday. "If we show the commitment which we have displayed so far this season I am confident that we will prove our current position is not a false one."

□ If Ron Noades, the ebullient chairman of Crystal Palace, has his way, the British weekend will never be the same again (Peter Ball writes). But Noades has some way to go before convincing his colleagues that the Football Association Premier League should play on Sundays.



Durie: Lineker's partner

Mansell keeps eye on road

From NORMAN HOWELL in BARCELONA

NIGEL Mansell put last week's pit-stop disqualification in Portugal behind him here yesterday by recording the second fastest time during the first qualifying session for the Spanish grand prix tomorrow.

Mansell, disqualified at Estoril after a wheel came off his Williams, was two-tenths of a second slower than Gerhard Berger's McLaren at the new Catalonia circuit. Third fastest was Ayrton Senna, who could win the championship here. He is 24 points ahead of Mansell with three races left.

Mansell said: "I have forgotten about last weekend, but some people haven't and they are talking about it too much. Without a Williams team this year, there wouldn't have been much of a champ-

ionship at all and that is often forgotten. It has been very tough for us all in the team and not just for me."

"It has been very hard to get motivated today. I haven't slept a lot since last weekend and it took me a long time to get going. On my best lap, I had a big engine problem too with oil pouring out for the last third of the lap. It made things difficult. The engine lost power and I was just grateful to get my time in."

Mansell's time looked good enough for the provisional pole until a few minutes from the end, when Berger slipped past, almost unnoticed as most were concentrating on Senna's third and final lap. Senna was not the only driver to try one more lap than is usual and it was a mixed day for the Brazilian with his tyres

and his communication with the McLaren team.

There are only two sets of tyres for qualifying but drivers can choose to mix and match the used sets. Senna wanted to the best of those he had used, but the team fitted those from his first run. This led to a sharp reaction from the world champion, but he and Ron Dennis, the team manager, were quick to make up.

But for most of the afternoon the eye-catcher was Michael Schumacher, the precocious Benetton driver who is continuing to amaze with his poise, precision and purposefulness. He is fifth on the provisional grid, four places ahead of Nelson Piquet, his vastly experienced teammate.

Petrol fuels suspicion, page 34

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Minolta give you advanced optics for brighter images and the best range - including autofocus binoculars. They're worth a closer look!

MINOLTA

Angelic innocence is lost forever at Gabriels

SIMON BARNES
ON SATURDAY

How long does it take for innocence to wither and die? That is the question being asked at *Non-League Traveller* magazine.

You would have thought that there was no more innocent pursuit in the world than galloping all over the country to watch Brightingsea versus Halstead or Newport YMCA versus Yaysybwil, collecting football grounds and programmes as you go. But now things have got so bad that the magazine is talking about drawing up a code of conduct for ground-hoppers to prevent various abuses and nastinesses that have soured the Eden of such places as Castleton Gabriels.

Ground-hoppers, desperate for new grounds to visit, have taken to telephoning club secretaries in the middle of the night demanding fixture details, and if they arrive at some obscure ground and cannot buy a programme - the Holy Grail of the visit, the proof that the conquest has been made - they have been known

to turn abusive. The magazine reports that one programme-less group of travellers refused to pay admission and spent the entire match making loud remarks about the facilities, the club and "the north". Great events excite great passions: a lesson ground-hoppers and Castleton Gabriels are learning in a hard school.

Cash-in band

More on the death of footballing innocence. The fanzine phenomenon began as a self-conscious "alternative" to the sycophancy and sensationalism of conventional football journalism. They opposed racism, sexism and homophobia as good chaps do. They made a lot of jokes, too. Now, this has all changed. Martin Lacey, editor of a new

selection of writing from fanzines called *Get Your Wrist Out*, bemoans the lowering of once-high ethical standards, the incessant rival-baiting and, most of all, the quest for profit. Now, there is money in the game. Naturally, that changes everything.

Lacey was approached by someone starting a fanzine. "I was stunned when he dropped into the conversation, without a hint of irony, the admission that he didn't actually know anything about football and did I think it would be a problem?"

□ This column has been asked to play for perhaps the finest trophy in sport - a ping-pong ball painted by Beryl Cook. Tomorrow, to celebrate the centenary of the Chelsea Arts Club, and to raise money for the Artists' General Benevolent Trust, 31 artists and art dealers, and one newspaper column, will take part in a ping-pong competition organised by the Royal Gallery, where Beryl Cook has a new show. I cannot afford a paint-

ing myself but the chance to earn one through the sweat of my brow and the power of my forehead is irresistible. I look forward to mauling an artist with pure top-spin.

Furtive fondle

All Spain is rocking with laughter after the bizarre affair between the footballers, Michel and Carlos Valderrama in a Spanish league match. The business was summed up by the man who sat in judgment over it all, José Javier Forcens.

After fining Michel £3,000, he described events thus: "Michel, with a furtive glance but a certain hand, seized the intimate parts of Valderrama, manipulating in public that which constitutes a gift assigned by nature exclusively to the masculine sex."

Greenhouse effect

At last, we have an explanation for Yvonne Murray's sad performance in the 3,000 metres

at the athletics world championships in Tokyo. She did much of her training on a treadmill in a greenhouse to get used to the heat, and complained of oxygen debt after the race. Since plants give out oxygen, her greenhouse training took place in an oxygen-rich atmosphere. "Her body would be adjusted to this, to the possible extent of her blood becoming foiled into reducing its red cell content in oxygen-rich air."

This explanation comes from William Gentleman, her former coach and a graduate in zoology, in a letter to *Athletes Today*. Exactly where his tongue is vis-à-vis his cheek, I cannot say.

Pain in the pocket

One of the great things about sporting success in the United States is that you do not have to hang about to cash in. All you need is a certain lack of squeamishness, and squeamishness has never been a problem with Jimmy Connors.
